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MRS. GERARD LOWTHER.

Hyde Park Corner.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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"VAGROM MEN"

IT has often happened before that quite interesting documents have come out in the garb of Blue Books; but few of these volumes contain so much reading at once amusing and instructive as the one recently published relating to the question of vagrants. No doubt a great deal of misapprehension exists in regard to the question involved. Many politicians and journalists appear to think that every problem which has to be settled to-day is quite new. To hear many of them talk, and to read what they have written, it might almost be imagined that there were never any unemployed in Great Britain until the dawn of the twentieth century, and that the poor and the pauper are sudden births of our latter-day civilisation, as are also those who are variously called tramps, vagrants, wayfarers, and in the expressive phrase of the North, "ganging folk." The student of the social history of England, however, is well aware that all those nuisances existed from the beginning. The sturdy beggar was a terror to the district in mediæval times, and our forefathers had often recourse to forcible means in order to make the idle work. The very fact that, just before Sir Walter Scott's time, the blue-gown, such as was Edie Ochiltree, was a King's bedesman—that is to say, a person specially licensed to beg by the King—would go far to show that the unlicensed tramp or beggar was a plague to the land. Thus there was nothing new in the problem which the Departmental Committee had set themselves to study. This, however, was no reason why they should not exert themselves to the utmost to execute the task which had been laid upon them. The fact that an evil has existed throughout all these generations of men is no reason whatever why it should not be tackled at the present moment. We are among those who believe that it is the duty of each generation to help the world a little, and leave things not as they were, but at least a trifle better than it found them. So it is good to have the facts of the tramp question brought clearly

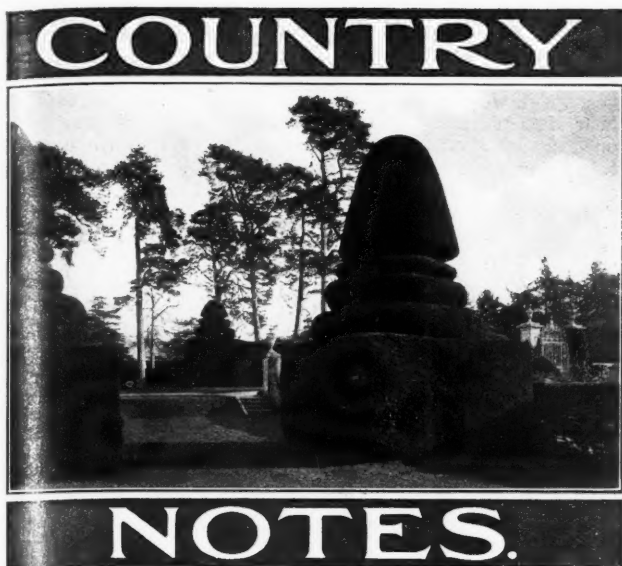
home to us, and at the same time to be enabled to consider the practicability of the steps that have been suggested as means for dealing effectually with these estrays from civilisation.

The first thing to ascertain is the probable number of those who lead an irresponsible life upon the road. No one has yet been able to obtain a census of these waifs and strays, but the authorities of the Local Government Board are probably not far wrong when they estimate them at something like 40,000, and that total ought to be divided into two different parts. There is, in the first place, the *bonâ-fide* searcher after work. It must frequently happen in a country like this that an industry in a particular locality fails, and that those engaged in it have therefore to tramp to a considerable distance in search of further employment. This sort of person is the one with whom the law ought to deal very tenderly. It may happen to the best of men that misfortune, over which they have no control, may drive them from the ranks of paid and steady labour to those of the unemployed, and if they honestly and earnestly try to find something for their hands to do, justice as well as common humanity would dictate that adequate help should be given them. We are glad to see that this is fully recognised in the report before us. It is undoubtedly true that if a man will not work, neither should he eat, and even a casual workman thrown out of a job may be very well asked to do some work in return for the relief extended to him; but both in amount and in the time required to do it this should be as little as possible, the aim of the law not being in this case punitive, but to help the man to get back into the ranks of organised labour. Unfortunately the *bonâ-fide* searcher after work only forms a section of the "vagrom men" now under consideration. There is a fairly large class of professional tramps, men who have altogether revolted against the primeval curse which said that by the sweat of their brow shall they eat bread. Virtually, then, they do not recognise the validity of this command, and of course when they have once flung themselves clear of the traces of civilisation it is hard work to reclaim them. There is a certain charm in the fact that responsibilities are no longer recognised, that a man need neither work for himself nor his dependents, and that all he owes to the law is to escape from its clutches.

But this matter does not admit of a sentimental cure. The professional tramp, oscillating as he generally does between two large towns, and calling at the villages on his way, with the avowal that in one direction he is going North for work, and in the other that he is going South, when as a matter of fact work is the last thing he wishes to find, is a source of danger. He is, in the first place, a man outside the pale of the law. In plain English, he has no scruples about taking up anything that comes within his reach and his fingers. He may not be a professional thief, but he is a man with little to strengthen him against the temptation to steal. Secondly, he is almost compelled to seek alms, and though some of the fraternity do this quite civilly, others will ask relief, particularly of women and young people, in a voice and with a mien that make refusal appear to be dangerous. Another point not to be neglected is that those people who are most filthy in their habits very frequently carry the infection of disease from one village to another. Several cases of small-pox have been traced to the tramp. We are, therefore, glad to see that sensible proposals for dealing with them have been brought forward. One is that the relief given them should be different from that afforded to the searcher after work. They ought, as nearly as possible, to be compelled to do an amount of labour that would pay for the relief extended. In the second place, they should not be allowed to go about the country without some sort of licence, which would naturally be endorsed by every union from which they obtained relief. Finally, if other measures proved of no avail, it is quite a sound proposition that these sturdy beggars should be transported to a labour colony, and be compelled for the space of six months or more to work for their living and forswear drink and live cleanly. That is the only possible means by which they can be brought back to the ranks of the industrious, and in applying these means there ought to be no waste of false pity or sentiment. We hold very strongly that whenever a man can prove that he has worked recently, and that he is honestly in search of work, the business of the State ought to be that of a helpful friend; but if a man be a notorious shirker, who is simply using the pretext of seeking work as a means of extracting alms, it is only the falsest and most sickly sentiment that would interfere between him and the prescribed measures that should give a stimulus to his sense of duty.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Mrs. Gerard Lowther. Mrs. Lowther was, before her marriage, daughter of Mr. Atherton Blight, an American, and her husband, a brother of the third Lord Lonsdale, is at present His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tangier.



NATURALLY enough, now that the South African War is fading into the past, some of those who took a conspicuous part in it are disappearing for ever from the scene. One whose loss will be generally regretted is General Sir W. Gatacre, whose death has just occurred at Gambela in the Upper Sudan. General Gatacre, or "Back-acher," as he was not unkindly nicknamed by the soldiers whom he commanded, was a very brave and, undoubtedly also, a most able soldier, but he was one of those who seemed to be born under an unlucky star. During the operations in Egypt he took charge of the British brigade during the advance on and at the battle of Atbara, where he distinguished himself by his personal bravery. When the South African War broke out he was one of the first officers appointed to the command of a division, but he had very ill-luck during the campaign, and the trouble he got into is a matter of quite recent history. The Reddersburg disaster was unfortunate for him, although it is doubtful, to say the least, whether it was due to any negligence on his own part. After a time he was reappointed Major-General in command of the Eastern District, but in 1901 he met with a bad accident in the hunting-field. He was able to resume his duties, however, in the course of a few months, and held his command until December 8th, 1903, when he was relieved by Major-General Plumer. He retired on March 19th, 1904. A man of indefatigable energy, he just wanted that something of good luck which would have carried him on to the highest eminence in his profession.

Annually the Rev. Dawson Burns, D.D., tots up the drink bill of the United Kingdom, and it is satisfactory to know that last year there was a substantial decrease in the consumption both of spirits, wine, and beer. This is the sixth year in succession in which this decrease has been shown, and it has led to the question as to the possibility of this country gradually becoming sober without any Act of Parliament. True, such a speculation is rather premature at the present moment. After the reductions of the last six years have been made, we still spend the gigantic sum of £164,167,941 on drink—a fact which, as it were, shouts on the housetops that there is much more call for reform than reason for exulting at the decrease already made. It means that if we take an average of the population of the United Kingdom the expenditure per head is £3 15s. 11½d. per annum on drink, or that a family of five gets through nearly £20. If we take into account the millions of those who do not drink at all, it is obvious that the individual who drinks must do so to an extent that would not have disgraced the wine-sodden gallants of the Regency. There is, therefore, plenty of work for the teetotal reformer to do.

At the same time, it is extremely interesting to try and analyse the reasons that have led to the decrease in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Partly, no doubt, it may be traced to the extended habit of drinking tea. Among the institutions of town none is more flourishing than the afternoon tea-shop, and it is safe to say that many thousands take tea to-day who a generation ago would have refreshed the inner man with spirits more or less potent. Among the working classes, too, there is an increasing number of those who do not deem it necessary to spend the surplus of their income in beer or whisky. They have grown more intelligent both in their diet and in their amusements, and a very great number even consider it sufficient to go into the open air, or to an exhibition, and confine their refresh-

ment to the consumption of such harmless beverages as tea or coffee. Something must be said for the growing popularity of athletic exercises, particularly cycling. It is possible that, when beginning to ride a bicycle, a man may still think it incumbent upon him to stop at a fair number of public-houses and imbibe beer; but a very little experience shows that there is really more pleasure in refraining. If this be the real reason why the consumption of alcoholic liquors is decreasing, it is very obvious that those who wish to reform the habits of their countrymen can easily tell them what to do.

We have so often found occasion to notice the really very serious loss that the country is sustaining in the continual erosion of the coast, especially on the East side of England, that it is satisfactory to find that the case is being taken up vigorously in Parliament, and that the departments of the Government especially concerned in the matter are disposed to give it sympathetic attention, as promised by the speeches of Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. John Burns. Many subjects that come before the House may be, and must be, matter of debate and divided opinion; but there can scarcely be much division of opinion as to whether it is advantageous to the country to lose a tract of land annually of the size of Gibraltar, according to the estimate of Mr. A. S. Wilson, member for Holderness (Yorkshire), who moved the amendment raising the question. Mr. Wilson referred chiefly to the erosion on the East Coast from Bridlington to Spurn Head. Other Yorkshire members, besides the members for Thanet, for the Isle of Wight, for St. Augustine's (in Kent), for Eastbourne, and for Wellington (Somersetshire), followed to the same effect, requesting the immediate attention of the Government to the erosions, and showing how grave was the national loss that they caused. From all of which discussion it is hoped that something may be done in the way of helping the local people to bear the expense of meeting the attacks of the sea, and thereby at the same time, it may be, of finding employment for some of those who have at present no work to do.

The best method of meeting the inroads of the sea must evidently vary locally as the attacks differ. In one place the sea is eating into the coastward cliffs, honeycombing them with caves; and where this is the form of attack, it has been found generally, both in England and on the coasts of the Bay of Biscay, that filling up the caves and facing the exterior surface with cement and masonry is an effective means of defence. In other places the form of the damage is chiefly the shifting of the shingle by the littoral currents, thus denuding the land of what may be called its natural defences, and in this connection it may be interesting to refer to an article in this paper of February 17th, with illustrations of the groynes, as devised by Mr. Case, that have proved so effective in collecting the shingle and thus retaining the natural defence on many parts of our coast. In other places again it seems that no more is needed than a more vigorous legislation to prevent the abstraction of the shingle for building and other purposes. Where sand forms the barrier against the sea, and sometimes it appears the most perfect barrier of all, the sandhills may be consolidated by the planting of marram and pines, as has been done with excellent result on parts of the coasts of Norfolk and many parts of the French coast.

IN PROSPER'S ISLE.

RONDEAU.

In Prosper's Isle the sweet wild-roses blow,
And clematis their purple blossoms show,
The little fledglings try their downy wings,
And the wild woodbine in soft tendrils clings
About the caves where honeysuckles grow.

All the shy, fearful, little woodland things
Hark to his song, as loud and clear it rings
From where, unseen, light Ariel sits below
In Prosper's Isle.

In an eternal summer here he sings,
Beside a silver brook, whose fairy springs
Run lightly o'er the ferny ground, and flow
About his feet. The brown bees come and go,
And the Lord Sun his golden largesse flings
On Prosper's Isle.

M. B. R.

At the last meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club a fine example of a cross between a blackcock and pheasant—beautifully mounted, and kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Rowland Ward and Co.—was exhibited. This bird, which had been shot at Ringford, Kirkcudbrightshire, by Mr. Walter M. Neilson, exhibited, in almost equal proportions, the characters of the males of both the parent species. The beak was that of a pheasant, but the nostrils, curiously enough, were those of the black-game; similarly, the legs were feathered for about one-third downwards from the "heel," while the rest of

the shank to the toes was scale-covered, though the arrangement of the scales differed in many respects from that which obtains in the pheasant. The head, neck, and under parts were almost black, glossed with green, though the flanks in certain lights showed distinct traces of the mahogany red and black markings so characteristic of the cock pheasant, while the quills were exactly like those of the pheasant; the covert feathers of the wing, the scapulars, and back showed an approximation towards those of the immature blackcock. The tail was rounded, and mottled with brown on a black ground, but showed no trace of bars; and finally, the bare patch of red skin so conspicuous in the pheasant was here reduced to half its normal size.

In the opinion of Mr. J. G. Millais, the Hon. Walter Rothschild, and Mr. Ogilvie Grant, this bird was the result of a cross between a blackcock and a hen pheasant, the reverse cross being even more rare, if, indeed, any undoubted instances are known. According to Mr. Millais, the number of species with which the black-game has been known to interbreed is considerable, and includes capercaillies, grouse pheasant, bantam, common fowl, and willow grouse. Unfortunately, since there appears to be no record of the effect of such interbreeding on the skeleton, the breast-bone and pelvis were not preserved.

The last number of the *Ibis* should be read by all who are interested in bird-life, inasmuch as it contains a most valuable account, by Mr. W. Eagle Clarke, of the results of the visit of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition to the South Orkney Islands. A dreary spot indeed, where the summer skies are always overcast, and winter brings the only fine weather! Lichens and mosses form the sole flora, and these are visible only during a few weeks. Yet the work achieved by the intrepid explorers of these nether regions has proved of the greatest value, and forms, as set forth by Mr. Eagle Clarke, most fascinating reading. The rare and little-known ringed penguin (*Pygoscelis antarctica*) was found breeding in colonies numbering millions of individuals, and species of all ages, as well as eggs, were taken. The nestlings are somewhat remarkable, inasmuch as they differ from all the other penguins, save the great emperor penguin, in that they are white. In addition, many other birds unfamiliar to most of us were met with here in great numbers, such as snowy petrels, giant petrels, and sheathbills, the most primitive of all the plovers.

But the greatest ornithological achievement was the discovery of the nest and eggs of the familiar Cape petrel, or Cape pigeon, for these had hitherto been unknown to science. Unlike the king and emperor penguins, the ringed, Adeline, and Gentos penguins lay two, or sometimes three eggs, which are deposited in a rude apology for a nest and brooded by the female in a procumbent position, thereby contrasting with the giant relatives, which lay but one egg, and nurse this treasure on the back of the feet, tucking it away under the feathers as they sit bolt upright on the ice. Mr. Eagle Clarke's description of the domestic economy of these penguins makes most delightful reading, but is too long for reproduction here, and would suffer by condensation. The giant petrel is the ogre of these penguin colonies, levying heavy toll on both eggs and young. Though adults and eggs were taken, weather conditions prevented the capture of nestlings. Robbing the Cape petrel proved rather a disagreeable business, inasmuch as the sitting birds when approached "ejected an evil-smelling reddish fluid composed of the semi-digested remains of crustaceans of the genus *Euphansia*. It was extremely disagreeable to the collector to receive it in his face when peering over a ledge, and the odour was found to cling to clothes for a very long time. The birds can squirt this fluid with great precision for a distance of 6ft. or 8ft."

Dr. C. Christy has just discovered in the Bugomo Forest of Lake Albert a frog's nest, made of a spittle-like froth, and attached to the back of some leaves overhanging a small stream. He, fortunately, took the precaution of photographing his find before placing it in spirits, for as soon as this was done the mass collapsed, revealing, however, a wriggling mass of tadpoles about one-third of an inch in length. These have just been received by the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. The species of frog which built the nest is yet unknown, but Dr. Christy will probably settle this point before he leaves the "Dark Continent." Foam nests of this kind, it may be remarked, are made by certain frogs in Japan, as well as by some South American species. Some fishes also, it may be remembered, make foam nests, of which the Paradise fish is a conspicuous example.

Last season the extraordinary weights of trout taken on the fly drew attention to the sport to be had at Blagdon, on the Bristol Waterworks Reservoir. The regulations for 1906 are now published with several alterations which are important to note, and which have received the approval of, and, indeed, were suggested by, several of the most successful fishermen of the

past two years. The day's catch is now limited to four brace of over 12in. and upwards. Spinning is prohibited altogether from boats, and before May 21st from the bank. The charges for two rods using one boat amount to £2 2s. a day, but so little does cost weigh when really good sport is possible, that already we hear of boats having been booked for as many as eight days by one person alone. The season lasts from April 23rd to September 23rd, and though it is hardly to be expected that the average weight of 1905 will be maintained in succeeding years, there is good ground for believing that bigger fish than have yet been caught are still there, and, what is more wonderful still, rise to the fly.

Judging by the accounts that come to us from the West Country, where, with the February Red and the Blue Upright, well conditioned little trout are killed at an earlier date than elsewhere in England, the fish do not seem to be getting into good condition as soon as might have been expected in a season of such mildness. The truth is that the mildness is not altogether a favourable condition for the fish. A few nights of keen frost at this season seem to help them to recuperate not a little; indeed, it appears a fairly constant rule that the condition of healthy fish improves as the temperature of the water becomes lower. According to tradition the Itchen opens for trout-fishing on St. Valentine's Day, but this is a survival from a time when the springs were earlier, and the knowledge of the habits of trout elementary. Every right-minded angler regrets the opening date, but still there are wrong-minded ones always ready to take advantage of the law's error. Only in the far West do fish come into anything like condition so soon.

A PRAYER TO SLEEP.

There is never a glad-throated minstrel that sings
Where the shades of the laurel lie deep—
There is never a bird in God's garden that brings
Such a balm for man's spirit to keep
As the music that falls from thy whispering wings,
Oh! my beautiful grey dove of Sleep!
It is long since with passion a-tremble the star
Bade his golden good-night to the rose;
Every moonbeam that slants to the earth is a bar
On the amethyst Gates of Repose,
On the Gates that the fingers of Dawn set ajar
For the hand of the Darkness to close.
It is long since the shadows of Silence and Rest
Drooped their wings on the sky and the sea,
Since the galloping breezes drew rein in the West
And loosed their tired steeds on the lea.
There is never a bird that is out of its nest,
And abroad in the darkness—but thee!
Happy lovers lie sleeping—full stars light the way
For a splendour of home-coming ships
That have gathered the opaline dreams of the day
To bring down on their rudderless trips.
I, too, would be dreaming! Ah! Little bird, lay
But a moment your beak on my lips!

WILL H. OGILVIE.

It is curious that the people who are least addicted to the keeping of ecclesiastical observances—that is to say, the members of the Salvation Army—should be responsible for a revival of the old principle of abstinence during Lent. They hold what they call a Self-denial Week, beginning on March 18th, and during which they ask that every member of the public should give up something in order that its value may go to the funds which the army uses for the purpose of relieving the poor.

Of course, we know quite well that birds are, generally speaking, earlier with their domestic arrangements in a year like the present, of unusual mildness, than in a colder season; but the converse fact of the remarkable punctuality with which many kinds return to their nesting-places almost on the same day of each year, without respect to the climate, is far more noteworthy. In all the country between London and the South Coast the snipe will be found repairing to their nesting haunts without fail on the second or third of March, and an excellent field naturalist, who has lived all his life in the mainland of the Lothians facing the Bass Rock, assures the writer that the gannets are never more than a day later or a day earlier each year in returning to their nesting rock, no matter what the weather be. Similarly, an owner of a salmon fishery on the Wye, who has been brought up from earliest childhood on the banks of the river, says that every year, at the same date within a day or so, the first salmon in his part of the river is always seen behind the same stone. This is a doubly remarkable point, as showing the very strong preference of fish for a certain station in a river, and is analogous to the well-known fact that the first immigrant woodcock in half a county will each year be found

under the same holly bush in the same covert. All these are easy animals to watch, in their comings and their goings. If others were equally easy it is likely that we should find their movements more constant to date than we now suppose them.

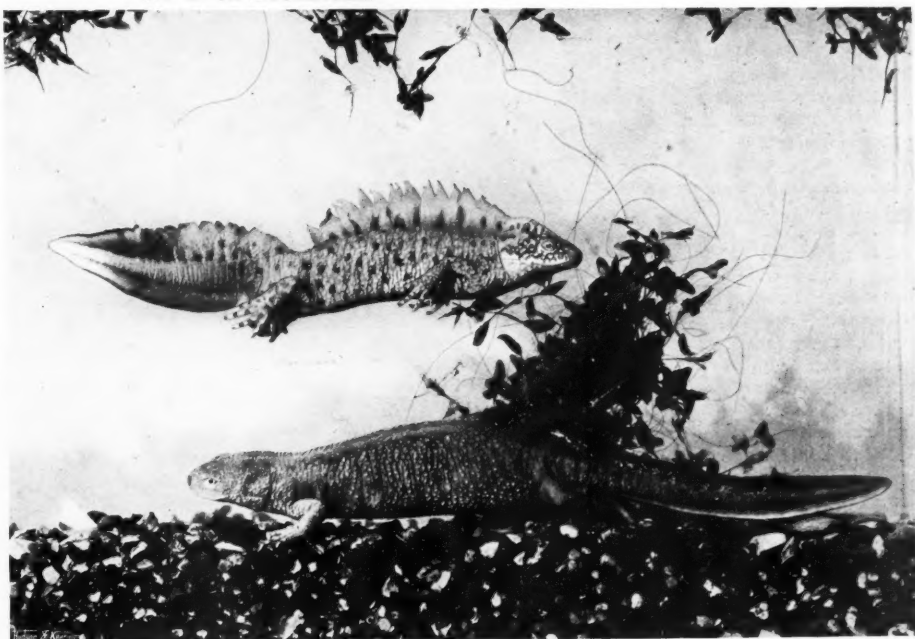
We see it announced by one of our contemporaries that the hackneyed word "awfully" is being replaced in fashionable circles by "bitterly." It is somewhat difficult to imagine anyone saying of a building or a picture, "Oh, yes! it was most bitterly jolly," though "awfully jolly" is one of those phrases which through their popularity and misapplication have become a nightmare to the fastidious. If anyone is going to make a change in fashionable slang we would suggest the word "nice" as thoroughly deserving of elimination. Stupid people generally have a very short vocabulary, and they have used this word "nice" as a

maid-of-all-work. A hostess is nice, her entertainment is nice, her dresses are quite nice, and her china most awfully nice. One hears all this until a fine word beloved amongst others by Jane Austen is reduced to meaninglessness. The use of diminutives is another corruption of the age. In a novel by a distinguished author that we were reading the other day we came upon the expression that it was a "full-moony night," and this is typical of a thousand phrases which may be said to be the stumblings of those who have not the gift of accurate expression. We wonder if fashion will ever return again to a taste for purity of language. The very people who are continually using, or rather misusing, these words would be shocked to hear that their old furniture was spurious, or in their own elegant language "faked," and words surely are as much worth treasuring as chairs and tables.

BRITISH NEWTS.

By G. A. BOULENGER.

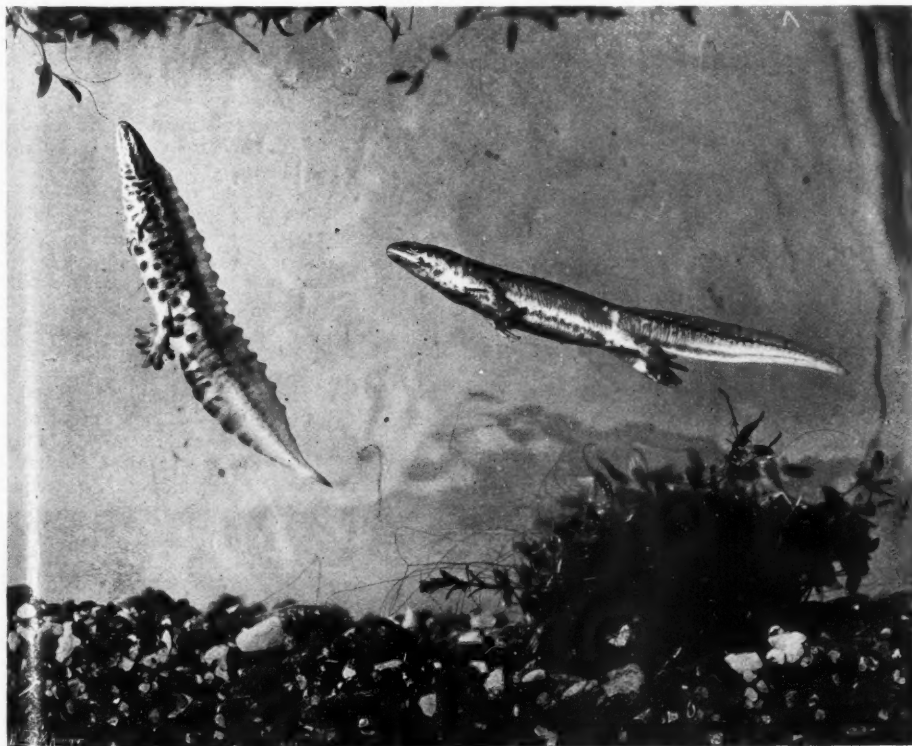
OUR reason for asking such an eminent student of science as Mr. G. A. Boulenger to write on newts was a very simple one. This little creature is probably less understood than any other inhabitant of our ponds, and since the day when Shakespeare's witches mixed in the same pot "eye of newt and toe of frog," the newt has been a centre round which are clustered endless superstitions. In English folklore it is considered to be a salamander, that is, a creature which fire cannot injure. At least, this is the view of elderly peasants, but we fancy it has been long exploded in the mind of the modern schoolboy, who, as soon as spring begins to bring balmy weather with it, knows that many a pool of water, which will dry up before the corn is cut, is now a meeting-place of newts, and that they are the most easily caught of the finny tribes. We used to fish for them with a piece of worm tied to a thread without any hook at all. Many country people, however, believe, in addition, that the newt is poisonous, and it is to be feared that it will take many generations of teaching to eradicate this erroneous notion. Mr. Boulenger can scarcely be expected to realise such things, because his account bears abundant evidence to what an enormous extent



MALE AND FEMALE CRESTED NEWTS.

naturalists have given their labour and their attention to this department of study.

It was the late Phil Robinson, we fancy, who at one time made a collection of the very extraordinary myths and traditions which were extant in regard to the newt. He was particularly happy in his citations from the poets, many of those who most enthusiastically loved Nature making the most astounding errors in their references to the habits of these quaint aquatic creatures. We are sure, therefore, that this article from so eminent a student as Mr. G. A. Boulenger will be very welcome to our readers.



PAIR OF COMMON NEWTS.

From the grace of their movements and the often beautiful colours with which they are adorned during the breeding season, newts have received a full share of attention on the part of Nature students. There is probably not a boy interested in natural history in this country who has not at some time caught newts and brought them home to watch their evolutions in some sort of improvised aquarium. And yet we are still far from being well-informed respecting the exact distribution in these islands of our three species of these Batrachians—for Batrachians they are, their natural affinities being with the frogs and toads, not with the lizards, in spite of a certain similarity of form. Twenty years ago no such problem of distribution appeared to exist. A reference to books elicited the information that two species, the large warty newt and the

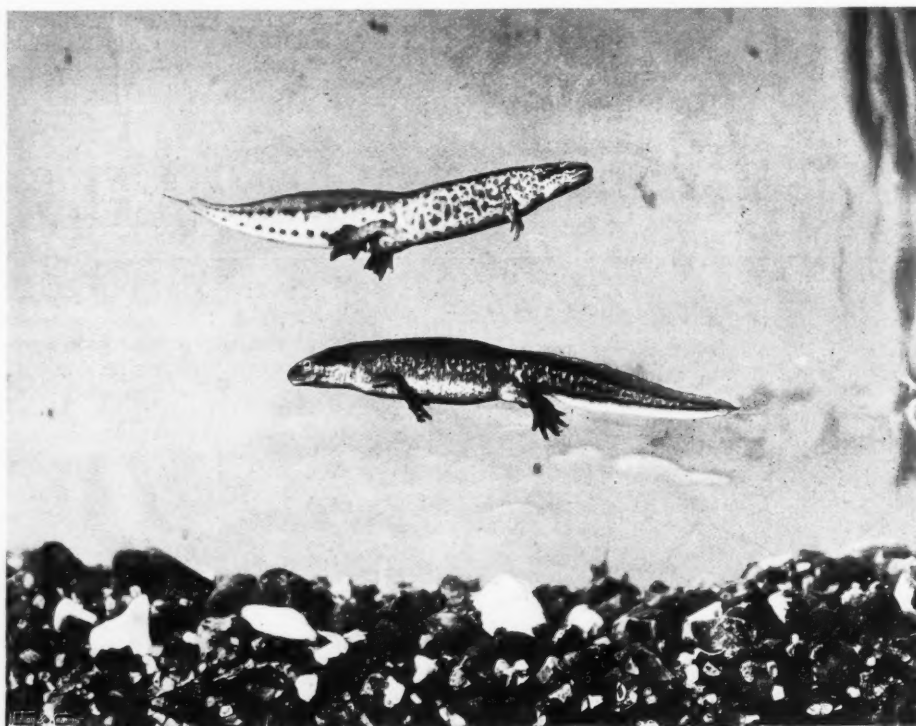
common smooth newt, were to be found, as a rule, in suitable places, whilst a third species, the palmated newt, was considered a rarity, and the various localities in which it was successively discovered were carefully recorded. I was, I believe, the first to point out that the palmated newt is, on the contrary, by far the most generally distributed species in Great Britain, and that the range of the common newt was in much greater need of investigation. Now that so much more care is bestowed on the compilation of local faunal lists, I am constantly asked for records of the common and the large warty species, whilst the palmated newt appears to be represented, at least locally, in most parts of England, Wales, and Scotland.

Spring will soon be upon us, and the newts will again congregate in ponds and pools for breeding purposes. Here is an excellent opportunity for the amateur naturalist to turn his taste to some really useful account by contributing to a more exact knowledge of the distribution of these interesting creatures. For this purpose it is necessary to be able to discriminate accurately between the three species, and I will here offer descriptions and figures by which this task should be rendered easy. It is necessary first to state that these Batrachians exhibit a marked sexual dimorphism, males in their breeding attire, such as they wear in the water in spring and early summer, differing very considerably from females; so much so that the females of two distinct species may appear less different from each other than from their respective mates. Later in the season, the males lose their crests and other nuptial ornaments, and the two sexes are more alike; but then the newts have retired on to land, concealing themselves under stones, logs of wood, dead leaves, or in holes in the earth, and are seldom met with. But the ponds and pools in which they have spent the spring will then be found well stocked with their larvæ—tiny creatures breathing by long, fringed, plume-like external gills, such as we see in the axolotls so commonly kept in aquariums. The correct identification of these larvæ will enable searchers in summer to pursue their investigations after the adult newts have left the water, and I will therefore also mention how the species may be distinguished in the larval condition.

The photographs which accompany the definition of the species are taken from specimens in full breeding costume, captured in the vicinity of London. They are represented swimming in an aquarium. The figures we often see in books of male newts walking on land with erect dorsal crest are

absurdities, as the crest cannot be maintained upright out of water.

1. The Crested or Great Warty Newt, *Molge cristata*. The largest British species, measuring 4in. to 6in. The largest specimens on record (from Hampton, Middlesex), measure: male 5½in., female 6½in. Skin more or less rugose with granular warts; a strong fold across the throat. Male with a high serrated crest on the back, ending abruptly above the hind limbs, not being continuous with the crest on the tail. Toes free, longer in the male than in the female. Upper parts dark olive grey, or dark brown to blackish, with ill-defined darker spots, speckled with white on the sides; upper surface of head, in the male, marbled black and white. Lower parts yellow or orange, spotted or marbled with



PALMATED NEWTS.

black; throat brown, speckled with black and white. Female with a yellow or orange stripe on the lower edge of the tail; male with a broad silvery white stripe on each side of the second half of the tail. Fingers and toes with blackish and yellow annuli. Larva with the tail strongly attenuate, often filiform at the end; fingers and toes very long and slender until close upon the period when the gills are absorbed.

2. The Common Smooth Newt, *Molge vulgaris*. Total length, 3in. to 4in. Skin smooth; no fold across the throat. Male with a high, festooned, or wavy crest on the back, continuous with the caudal crest. Toes free in the female, lobate (bordered by lobes of the skin, as in a grebe) in the male. Tail ending in a point. Upper parts olive or brown, with round back spots in the male, the crenations of the dorsal crest sometimes tipped with red; female often with dark dots or a dark line on each side of the back; a dark streak on each side of the head, passing through the eye. Lower parts yellowish white, with a median orange or vermilion stripe, spotted or dotted with black, the spots larger in the male, the spots sometimes confluent into a lateral streak in the female; throat white or yellow, usually spotted or dotted with black. Lower edge of tail yellow or orange, without spots, in the female; red, bordered above with blue and barred with black, in the male. Larva with the tail simply pointed, often very obtusely; fingers and toes moderately long; the space between the



CRESTED, COMMON, AND PALMATED.

Females from below.

upper eyelids twice as broad as the latter and equal to the distance between the eye and the nostril.

3. The Palmated Newt, *Molge palmata*. Total length, 2½in. to 3½in. Skin smooth; usually a more or less distinct fold

across the throat. Body quadrangular in section in the male, a more or less developed ridge or fold bordering each side of the back, in addition to a very low, entire crest along the middle; in the female, the body is nearly round in section, with a low ridge along the middle of the back, as in the common newt. Toes free in the female, webbed (like a duck's) in the male. Tail ending in a point in the female, often with a short filament projecting beyond the point; squarely truncate and ending in a very distinct filament in the male. Brown, olive, or yellowish above, with small darker spots, which are usually crowded on the head; a darker streak on each side of the head, passing through the eye; feet blackish in the male. Lower parts not coloured, except the median zone of the belly, which is yellow or orange; a few small black spots may be scattered on the belly, rarely on the throat. Lower edge of the tail yellow or orange in the female, bluish grey in the male; a series of spots, sometimes confluent, near the upper and lower borders of the tail. The best criterion for distinguishing this species, in both sexes and at every period of the year, is the entire absence of pigment on the throat, which is flesh-coloured. But this test cannot be applied to specimens preserved in spirit. Larva distinguished from that of the common newt in having the space between the upper eyelids somewhat more than double the width of the latter and greater than the distance between the eye and the nostril. A fourth species, the beautiful Banded Newt, *Molge vittata*, has been erroneously included in the British fauna. It is a native of Syria, Asia Minor, and the Caucasus.

Distribution.—The crested newt and the common newt appear to have much the same distribution in England and Scotland, but the former is less abundant in individuals and also more local. Both seem to be absent from Wales and from Cornwall and the greater part of Devonshire. There is only one apparently reliable record of the crested newt in Devonshire—a specimen from Exeter in the British Museum. In Scotland

is very desirable to ascertain the limit of their distribution to the west.

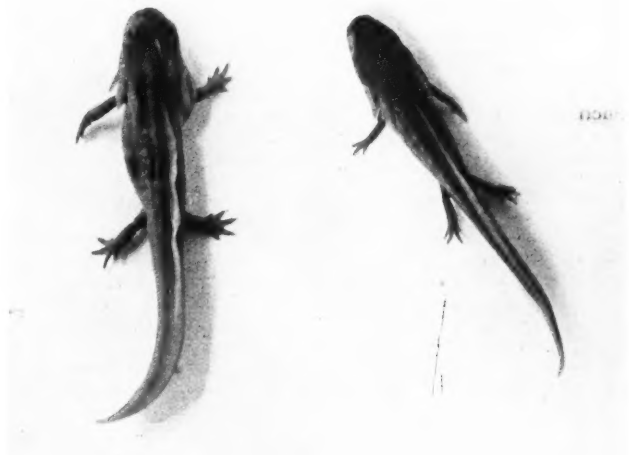
The palmated newt is the only one which ranges over the whole of England, Wales, and Scotland, but in the eastern and central counties of England it is very local or absent. It has not been recorded from Kent. The following is a list of the counties in which its presence has been ascertained: *England*—Yorkshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Norfolk, Essex, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire (with Isle of Wight), Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall. *Wales*—Anglesey, Carnarvonshire, Cardiganshire. *Scotland*—Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, Elgin, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Perth, Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Haddington, Berwick, Peebles, Argyll, Dumbarton, Renfrew, Ayr, Kirkcudbright. Also Isle of Rum. For many of the Scottish records I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Eagle Clarke.

I should feel grateful for any notes on the occurrence of the crested and common newts in Devonshire and in the northern parts of Scotland, as well as for records of the palmated newt in any county not mentioned in the above list; and I shall be pleased to identify any doubtful specimen sent to me at the British Museum (Natural History). Notes on their relative abundance, where two or three species exist, would be of interest. Around London the three species occur.

The common and the crested newt are very generally distributed, the former, however, less abundant in individuals, and preferring, as a rule, deeper water, where it is more difficult to



CRESTED FEMALE WITH GILLS.



LARVÆ: CRESTED AND PALMATED.

capture them; whilst the palmated newt is more local, though quite common where it occurs. I have found it in Epping Forest and in the western parts of Surrey.

The habitat of the crested and common newts in Europe is a northern and eastern one, and is nearly the same for the two species. An oblique line through France from the mouth of the Loire to that of the Rhone indicates roughly the western limit of their distribution, whilst to the east they extend to Southern Scandinavia, the Ural, and the Caspian Sea. The habitat of the palmated newt, on the other hand, is decidedly a western one, including the whole of France, the Channel Islands, the northern parts of Spain and Portugal, Belgium, Southern Holland, Switzerland, Baden, Wurtemberg, and Northern Germany as far east as the Weser and the Harz Mountains; it does not extend east or south of the Alps.

It is a remarkable fact that, although related so closely and occurring so frequently together in pools of small extent, the common and palmated newts are never known to produce hybrids, whilst the crested newt, when co-existing with a south-western ally, to which it is by no means more nearly akin than are the two above-named species to each other, regularly gives rise to the form known as *Molge blasii*, which has now been proved to be a cross between *M. cristata* and *M. marmorata*.



CRESTED NEWT LARVÆ; TWICE NATURAL SIZE.

both occur only in the south, Perthshire being apparently their northern limit. The common newt is the only species known from Ireland. As already stated, too little attention has been paid to the occurrences of these two newts, and it

Before concluding, I wish to reproduce here an appeal which I made a few years ago in a presidential address to the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies: A remarkable phenomenon is that of neoteny, *e.g.*, the abnormal prolongation of the larval state, or of certain attributes of that state, of which we have so well known an example in the axolotl of North America and Mexico, some individuals, instead of transforming into an Amblystome salamander, retaining the branchiate larval form and breeding in that condition. It is not so generally known that our newts present exceptional examples of the same phenomenon, but we have specimens of branchiate adults of the crested and common newts preserved in the British Museum, together with similar specimens of most of the European species. There are even some localities in the Alps of Italy which are known to

produce in comparative abundance axolotl forms of the Alpine newt—*Molge alpestris*. The example of which a photograph is here given is a crested newt with gills, found near Bungay in Suffolk by the late Mr. B. B. Woodward about 1858, and presented by him to the British Museum. Now, we know, through the true American axolotl, that the tendency to retain the larval characters, without any interference with the normal development of the reproductive organs, is hereditary to a considerable extent, and I would recommend those who may chance to come across stray specimens of any of our newts in that condition to preserve them alive, and, considering the facility with which they breed in captivity, to attempt raising a race of permanent gill-breathers, which would prove an interesting addition to our list of aquarium animals.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

FOXES AND OTHER DOGS.

IT would be interesting to know how the fox has come to wander so far from the habits of his early ancestors. The original progenitor of the dogs was undoubtedly a gregarious animal, hunting in company. How came the fox then, a true member of the dog family, to turn cat-like and "walk by himself"? His secret way of life, his affection for one lair, and his method of hunting are all feline; while least canine of all is the fact that he uses his voice so little—even to dying mute.

"He took a hundred mortal wounds

As mute as fox mid mangling hounds."

And the gregarious animal must have travelled very far from the habits of his kind when he has learned to face death without calling on the rest of the pack for help.

DEGENERATE REYNARD.

Possibly foxes sprang from weaklings that were turned out from the pack, and in their defencelessness acquired the trick of going to earth for shelter. Being compelled to pick up their own living by hunting alone, they were forced to turn to smaller quarry than the pack was accustomed to pull down. Possibly they were animals of superior cunning, who of their own accord took to solitary ways, finding that they thrived better on their own catch of small game than they could on their individual share of the joint kill of the tribe. If that was so, the fox has in the long run paid for his aloofness by becoming comparatively the weakling of the family, by losing the power, even if he would go back to it, to hunt the larger beasts, and by being less of a fighting animal than other dogs, who should really be smaller than he, such as the dhole and the Cape hunting-dog, which have clung to their sociable ways and have kept in training by the running down of game bigger than themselves. His voice, from comparative disuse (for in his furtive life, with no pack to call upon, the less he gives tongue the better), has degenerated and become almost rudimentary. "The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb"—nor, apparently, at any other time, save in pure light-heartedness or when calling to another of his kind. The Cape hunting-dog, too, is a silent animal, but he has a voice when he chooses to use it; and most of the dogs from constant practice in the chorus of their fellows have (like the Indian jackal and the North American coyote) voices out of all proportion to their size. The author of "In My Indian Garden" speaks of the noise of a pack of jackals as that of a "brass band bedevilled"—"every throat a fend's, every fiend double-throated." I myself in the Rocky Mountains once heard a pack of coyotes coming along the gulch-bottom below me, and waited till they should cross an open space that I might see how many there were. There were precisely two—just one couple; and a yard before they came into view I would cheerfully have bet on six at least, and I think on a dozen.

AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING.

The dog—the ordinary domestic dog—retains much more of the old gregarious instinct than the fox. His attachment to man is itself a remnant of it, being but a transfer of allegiance from the leader of the pack; and, in the matter of his voice, the interesting suggestion has recently been made that when a dog howls on hearing music, it is neither pain nor pleasure—as has been so often argued—but only the old instinctive responding to the music of the pack in full cry. In partial confirmation of which is the fact that nearly all those dogs which are still habitually used for hunting in company give tongue in baying rather than a bark. How strongly the old joint hunting instinct survives in even the most civilised of dogs was forced upon me only a few days ago, when out for a walk with a friend and a fifteen months old Old English sheepdog for company. We met the harriers. It looked as if they would cross the road a quarter of a mile or so ahead of us, but on reaching the empty highway the hare turned our way, and came to within 20yds. before seeing us, then broke through the hedge again and off across the plough.

THE CALL OF THE WILD.

Bob loves a hare. There is never the smallest chance of his catching one; but that in no way lessens his enthusiasm, and he would gladly have given a bit of one of his ears then to have been permitted to go in pursuit; but at the word he whimpered and came to heel. Then, to guard against accidents, the lead was snapped on his collar. The hounds followed the course of the hare, swinging through the hedge 20yds. away, while the horses kept on along the high road past us, the hedge being quite unnegotiable, to a gate beyond. Bob paid no attention to the horses, though the earth shook as they pounded by; but the hounds—! For the space of some fifteen minutes he was a mad dog—not disobedient, but mad. Neither voice nor whip made any impression on him. He no longer had a master. He was the old wild dog once more, and the rest of the pack was on the trail, and his place was with them. And for all those fifteen minutes, during which it was a miracle that lead and collar held, he sang to the pack—not howling or barking, but the old hunting song which must have been dead in his

ancestors for centuries. Slowly, when the last glimpse and echo of the hunt were lost, he came back to himself. It was precisely like one hypnotised recovering consciousness. Once back, he was entirely his normal self, the gentlest, friendliest, most obedient pup that ever was fifteen months old; but for that one quarter of an hour he was a wild dog, neither more nor less.

THE PUNCTUALITY OF NATURE.

Even more punctual, perhaps, than the movements of the birds and the budding of the trees is the appearance at their appointed season of the butterflies and moths. Birds may be detained by weather many days beyond their customary dates, or hurried on ahead; vegetation which is above ground is similarly checked or pushed forward; bulbs, it is true, seem to go on with the work of Nature underground, without regard to what is passing overhead; and similarly chrysalides, whether under the earth or only wrapped in more or less flimsy cocoons, ripen and hatch with singular indifference to the barometer or thermometer. There are as yet no butterflies of the New Year, the "early" butterflies, which are from time to time reported, being, of course, only hibernating specimens which have either been disturbed in their winter sleep or, in too exposed a hiding-place, have been tempted abroad by premature sunshine. But the procession of the moths goes on, though in driplets only in the winter months, all the year round; and this year, to one who is watching, they are marking time as regularly as usual. The genuine "winter moths"—the *Cheimatobias* and the rest—have disappeared. For some time now the insects which belong specifically to February and March (*Progemmaria* and *Leucophaæa*, if the names have any interest) have been about; and now the March Moth (so called), which is generally punctual to the third week of February, has arrived. Very soon, too, with the blossoming of the swallow, some of the most profitable open-air collecting of the year can be done.

THE ETHICS OF BIRD-COLLECTING.

The collecting of butterflies and moths is, with the general increase of the Nature cult, growing in popularity, and is much more of a pursuit and much nearer to being a "sport" than most people are inclined to believe. It has the double advantage, moreover, not common in the collecting of wild things, that it involves no cruelty—for certainly moths and butterflies do not feel pain—and that the quarry which is killed serves, so far as we know, no usefulness in life. Indeed, if one cared to push the point, every moth and butterfly is more or less destructive to vegetation, and therefore ought to be killed as vermin. The same is not true of the collecting of either birds or their eggs; and what seems to me a peculiarly shameless and disgraceful case has just been reported to me of a collector—a private gentleman—in Norfolk, who recently went to spend five days on the Broads and came back boasting of his "luck" in that in that time he had "secured" no fewer than four bearded tits. If there be one bird in England which it seems to me quite unpardonable to kill, it is the bearded tit of the Norfolk Broads; and for one man to shoot four, merely to make an effective case for his own hall or museum, is an act which it is not easy to find terms to describe. In this case some of the "collector's" neighbours happen to be interested in bird-preservation, and, so far as their houses go, he is to be cut hereafter. But that is a long way from being an adequate penalty for the offence.

THE PERPLEXING OWLS.

One night recently I heard a tawny owl "to the moon complain." He complained twice, and it is only noteworthy because it is the first owl's note that has been heard here since mid-December. In December I spoke of the tawny owls as being just then the most vocal of all birds—as they always are each year for a short season. Then, before Christmas, they grow silent. What are they doing in their vociferous days? Is it the old male birds driving the young ones of the year away (or being driven, as the case may be), and the quarrelling of households as each settles the limits of its domain for the coming season? Certainly for a while each year there are great grings on in owldom for some five or six weeks from the beginning of November; and apparently the noise is all made by the male birds, for the woods and fields echo all night long to the long-drawn wailing "whoo-co-oo," without any intermingling of the other characteristic notes. In a short while now the "whoo-co-oo-ing" will begin again, but with it also will be heard the "ker-wick" of the female bird—though the male, I believe, makes it, too, at times. But just now owls are, for the most part, silent, and it must have been some more than common provocation that made the bird hoot lately. I have said before that it is a pity owls are not day-birds, so that we might watch them as we do our blackbirds and our thrushes. Caged owls really teach one nothing—except that they have a much larger range of "notes" than one commonly supposes, and that they take the queerest whims in regard to their food. But a tame owl—at all events in the hours when we can see him—bears little more resemblance to the wild one, as he "lets himself go" at night, than a stuffed parrot does to a parrot in a cage. So we really know deplorably little about owls.

H. P. R.

THE FRINGE OF THE WOODLAND.



W. Rawlings.

A SUSSEX UPLAND.

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YOU will often find that the best of all ways of inspecting the life that goes on so secretly and so populously in our woodlands is not to enter at all within the precincts of the wood which is the residence of the creatures you would like to observe, but to keep quietly along its outskirts, following its fringes, every here and there taking a look in over the marching fence, and standing for a while to see what Nature

has to show you. If you are within the march of the wood all the woodland creatures will see you a very long while before you see them; and if, having seen you, they act out their life drama at all, it will not be in the perfectly unconscious and natural way that they follow when they suppose themselves alone and unobserved. Outside the wood you are not so visible, nor are you nearly so obnoxious to them, for



W. Rawlings.

IN THE ANDREADSWALD.

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you are not yet within their home, you are only on its threshold. No one who has studied the ways of animals can have failed to notice how appreciative they are of the protection—only fancied, it may be—that a hedge or a thick and opaque fence of any kind gives, or seems to give, them, even if they have perceived a possible foe on the far side of it. Of course they do not see as much of the foe as they would if the fence were not there, but this is not the real reason of their fancied security. On the contrary, a man is far more terrifying to a wild thing, say a deer, if he is partly concealed than if he is wholly and openly in view. A stalker, or a gillie, on the hill is very well aware of this, and if he is at all an experienced man, and is sent to move some deer, he will, it may be, much surprise a tiro who is watching him by lying down in the heather and going out of sight of the deer altogether as soon as they have once turned observant heads in his direction. The idea of the neophyte would be to stand up and wave the arms, windmill-like; and that, indeed, is the way that many foolish gillies will try for the moving of the deer. The older hand will try the other plan, which is so much the more effective. The deer

may often see a foolish gamekeeper station himself directly to windward of a burrow that he is ferreting. Those who know better and stand to leeward will find their rabbits bolt a good deal more readily; but there are many of the gamekeeping class who seem to be far too conservative ever to have even a chance of learning anything.

I have spoken of wandering through the wood, or of pacing along the march fence, but it is to be realised that a deal more of the woodland life is to be seen by standing still, by letting it come to you, than by any moving about in search of it. It is all of a piece with the old story of "still hunting." The one hunter sits on a log, and the game comes up and lets him shoot it; and the other goes tramping about all day and never sees any game at all. You may be quite sure that plenty of game saw him, and saw him in plenty of time to get into hiding before he saw it, taking care not to come his way. But the "still hunter" has to remember this—that, if his game is to come near and within range of him, he has to sit very still indeed. There must be no mistake about it; it must be an absolute immobility. An uneasy stillness will not effect his purpose.



J. M. Whitehead.

THE FOREST KNOLL.

Copyright.

are puzzled, perhaps they fear a snare. At all events, the sense of the unknown is upon them when a man appears and then disappears; but when he appears, and continues to appear, then, at all events, they know the worst—there is nothing left to the imagination, as we say; and whether this is exactly how the case appeals to the deer, the fact is beyond all doubt or question that they are much more alarmed by the stealthy approach of a man, if they detect him at all, than by his open and arm-waving coming.

So it is not merely because less of the foe is seen, when there is the screen of a fence between, that the wild things are less scared. No doubt they have a dim sense that a fence presents an obstacle that the foe has to pass in order to come to grips with them, and the fact at least is easily to be proved, that they are more accessible to approach and observation thus than when one is wandering in their own home wood. Many a glimpse you will get while you are wholly undetected; but if it be any of the furred creatures that you are trying to approach, you must remember that they have sensitive noses, as well as quick eyes, and that a hedge offers little obstruction to the passage of scent. Many even of those who are skilled in venery forget this, and you

From him we must take a hint if we are to surprise the secrets of Nature's ways. As we take our stand at the back of the fence, and look, like harmless spies, into the woodland home, we must let no unguarded movement betray us, for movement close at hand is what the eyes of all woodland creatures are so swift-sighted to detect. Far sight is not theirs, and would not be of any use to them; it has not been educated by the conditions of their life. The far-reaching power of vision is the gift of creatures living in great plains, or of those which soar and spy out their food in the immense spaces of the sky.

In the late autumn, or the winter of the end of November or early days of December, as we go softly along the fringes of the woodland, and pass by various kinds of the big trees that are its fabric, it may chance to us, coming to a place of beech trees, to hear all of a sudden a sound as of the rushing of some Niagara let loose on the moment. Then, if we have been observant of such things, we shall know at once the meaning of it—that it is not, indeed, the rushing of great waters, but of a great number of strong-winged wood-pigeons that have been feeding beneath the trees on a liberal banquet of the fallen beech mast. Had we been within the wood we should not have surprised

the feasters thus, so that they arise in a cloud close beside us and fill our ears with their great clamour. They would have seen our coming, and made off before we were so near at hand that their sound could be so startling. Now we

the same generous feast—chaffinches, for the most part, with a good few of the tit family—tiny people in comparison with the big wood-pigeons, and taking comparatively tiny flights, content to fly up into the branches of the beeches and wait till you have



S. C. Stean.

A WOODLAND WAY.

Copyright.

see the pearly grey forms rising in strong graceful flight through the naked branches, rising high over the tallest trees into the roofless heaven, soaring away to other pastures where they may hope for a banquet free of intruding watchers. After the great storm of the pigeons, numbers of smaller people keep rising from

gone by a yard or two and then to return to their feasting. Under the beeches there is no cover, not even any growth of grass, for nothing will live under the beeches' shade and drip; only the whole ground is russet red with the fallen leaves. You see nothing of the beech mast as you look over the fence—it is



E. B. Vignoles.

ON THE DOWNS.

Copyright.

too small and inconspicuous; only if you climb over and examine the ground carefully you will find that it is there ubiquitously.

Now and again, if the wood is preserved for game, you will almost put your foot on a rabbit lying out in fern among the low undergrowth of the woodland's fringes; and, startled out of his senses though he will appear, he will not for a moment be puzzled or lose his sense of direction, but will dash off at best speed and in a straight line for the shelter of his home in the wood. Pheasants, as a rule, will not lie so close by, but will make off, they, too, as they see you coming straight for the woodland covert, head in air, running as swiftly as the rabbits, and not troubling themselves to take flight. A little comic "relief," as is said, is given to the drama when you meet one of the *personæ*, either pheasant or rabbit, coming out of the wood, unsuspecting. Then, perceiving you of a sudden, he will turn tail, as if he had been caught on the way to some assignation compromising his reputation, and will scuttle back to the covert in an absurd haste that is undignified. But for your enjoyment of all the spectacle you must needs learn to go delicately, and with deliberation, taking time to pick your footsteps and with eye keenly alert. It is chiefly at two hours in the day that the woodland people come out of the covert, which is their home, to the outskirts, which are their playground and feeding-ground—morning and evening. If you are as ninety-nine people out of a hundred it is not very likely that you will be there to see them at their morning promenade and breakfast; and yet with some kinds it is by far the more interesting hour of the two. If there are black game in the wood it is at the dawn that they will come forth (always to the same place, which you may know by the trampling down of the grass within its circuit, and the feathers fallen from the warriors in the fray that lie about it) to dance their challenging dances at each other and fight their fierce matutinal fights. The fights seem as regular a part of the blackcock's daily programme as the morning tub is supposed to be of the self-respecting Englishman's. Even if there are no black game, you will not want for comedies. The rabbits come out and sit up and beg, and browse and chase each other and perform all kinds of absurd antics. The pheasants comport themselves in ways more ridiculous still, because with a finer assumption of dignity about it all. And if there are roe-deer in the wood, this is your best time and chance for observing their shy ways.

All this, except the blackcock's battles, you may watch at the evening parade also; but it is not quite so fine and full a performance as in the morning, and all is seen far better on the fringes of the woodland than in the woodland itself. Moreover, you have a more extended view of the sunrise or the

sunset, as the case may be, and the days of a man's life are not so many that he can afford to lose possible glimpses of beauty in any one of them.

IN THE GARDEN.

CARNATION PLANTING.

THIS is one of the best seasons of the year to plant Carnations. Much, of course, depends upon the position of the garden and the soil, but in many places, especially where the garden is near a large and smoky town, March planting is almost essential. Carnations under such circumstances rarely last through the winter, and it is necessary to pot them up in the previous autumn. While the plants are waiting in their pots to go to the open garden, the places they are to adorn should be prepared, and Carnations require a good diet. In the first place, if there is the slightest suspicion of wireworm, every pest must be removed, as nothing is more destructive to Carnations, a few being sufficient to destroy a large collection of varieties. We well remember planting an edging of the white *Pink Mrs. Sinkins*. The plants were strong and leafy, and there was a rich promise of those drifts of white flowers which scent the wind with their fragrance; but before the fulfilment of abundant flowering, wireworms began to work, with the result that in a short time hardly a plant remained. We were to blame, for the reason that the soil was not properly examined before the Carnations were put in. A rich loam mixed with well-decayed manure and some wood ashes form an excellent compost, in which the plants should succeed well, and produce large quantities of flowers for the house. Make the soil moderately firm round the collar of the plants, and choose, if a stock is purchased now, only varieties of well-known excellence. It would not be possible, for example, to find a more beautiful white than *George Maquay*, which is spotless, and the broad petals are of great substance, while the flowers are borne on strong, upright stems, and do not burst. Every Carnation-lover knows the difference between flowers that split and those that remain intact, without a petal out of its proper place. A split flower is never satisfactory—it has a bedraggled, unkempt appearance, and this is accentuated when a period of wet or stormy weather occurs at the time of flowering. Our experience is that the much-praised variety *Uriah Pike* is not a success outdoors, but is more perfect under glass. The colour is similar to that of the old *Clove*, and the flowers remain intact; the scent is powerful and sweet. *Murillo*, bright crimson, *Ketton Rose*, the fringed *Raby Castle*, *Duchess of York*, pink, *Miss Audrey Campbell*, the best of the generally unsatisfactory yellow-flowered race, *Cantab*, crimson, *Mephisto*, crimson, and *Seagull*, blush, are favourites, but new varieties continue to appear yearly. The love for the old garden favourites should not die. New flowers may in time take their place, but the old *Clove* still has a strong hold on the affections of gardeners.

CARNATIONS FROM SEED.

Wonderful results may be achieved by growing Carnations from seed when this has been saved from the finest varieties. Mr. James Douglas of Great Bookham has given pleasure to hundreds of Carnation-lovers through the superb quality of the seeds of Carnations he offers to the public. They

are saved from his world-famous strain of flowers, and it often occurs that a variety raised in this way is worth a distinctive name. When the seed is not selected with care the proportion of single to double sorts is very great, so much so that it sometimes occurs that not a double flower appears at all, these Carnations being known in the market as "Jacks." This is the time to sow the seed, and a hotbed, or even a warm greenhouse, will suffice, a temperature of about 60 deg. being necessary. Sow in pots, or in a shallow pan or box, and just cover the seed with the soil, which should be light loam. Put plenty of crocks, that is, bits of broken pot, in the bottom for drainage. When the seedlings appear wait until they are sufficiently large to handle, prick them out in boxes, where they may remain until they are 5 in. high, then transfer them to a well-prepared bed, such as suggested in the previous note, and await results. There is no greater pleasure in gardening than to watch the opening of a seedling flower, something we know nothing of. Of course, prizes are few and far between, but these children of the garden are looked forward to with pride, as something may be given to the world which it has not possessed before.

PLANTING GLADIOLI.

March is the month for planting the corms of the Gladioli, which should be put about 4 in. deep in a warm, well prepared and manured soil, but the manure must not come into contact with the plants. Gladioli are not quite the corms to plant by themselves, but are most useful as "dot" plants; that is, to plant amongst low-growing annual flowers, such as *Phlox Drummondii*, *Mignonette*, and the beautiful *Ostrich Plume China Aster*, to which the tall spikes act as a foil. Brilliant colour effects can be gained with the help of the Gladioli, especially when the hybrids raised by such firms as Kelway are planted, not singly, but in a bold group for the sake of effect. Many of these are, of course, expensive, but there are corms of a quite reasonable price. One of the best still of the Gladioli is the

scarlet *Brenchleyensis*, which has not only a flower of wonderful colouring, but is a "safe" plant. It rarely happens that this variety fails, but unfortunately the same cannot be written of the much-crossed hybrids. We well remember the masses of *Brenchleyensis* in the Royal Gardens, Kew. From a distance it seemed as if a scarlet carpet were spread over the soil, just the same colour picture that the Caucasian Poppy gives in the high days of summer. Approaching it we discovered that the beautiful carpet was made by this *Gladiolus*, and there was not an indifferent spike in the whole of this brilliant colony. We are planting it now amongst evergreen shrubs. A corner of the garden wants lighting up with colour, and we know of no more satisfactory plant than the *Gladiolus* to provide the picture we in our mind's eye desire to see.

THE MEZEREON.

Walking through a Buckinghamshire village a few days ago a sweet odour filled the air, and we knew that it came from the Mezereon, or *Daphne Mezereum* as it is called in books. There is no mistaking this exquisite shrub. The leafless shoots long before winter has gone are surfaced with a cheery purplish-coloured blossom, which distils the sweetest fragrance, so sweet that even the *Chimonanthus* is eclipsed. The Mezereon is quite hardy, and should be planted in groups in the pleasure ground or even in the shrubbery. It seems always appropriate, no matter where it is placed, and though the shrub has little summer beauty, this is atoned for by the flowers of winter. The flowers are followed by red-coloured fruits, which have a certain charm. There are several varieties. *Album*, as the name suggests, has white petals, and *grandiflora*, or *autumnalis* as it is also called, begins to bloom in autumn, and lasts some weeks in rich beauty. There is also a double white variety which is very pretty and lasts long in good condition. The reason of this is that the flowers are like little rosettes, and less easily injured by the weather than the single sorts.

THE LAND OF HOMELINESS.

WHEN Wordsworth wrote

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice

he was, in his heart, thinking of a third and very different sound—"the still sad music of humanity," sighing for that liberty whose native home the mountains and the sea have ever been. He wrote as a Briton thinking on the subjugation of Switzerland; and his fear was lest his own land also might be

invaded by the tyrant, and liberty be driven far away. And yet the "high-souled maid" has other haunts beside those of mountain and sea; and sometimes her chosen music is in a quiet land of homeliness, and rises from the hearts of a people prosperous, if not wealthy, comfortable, if not luxurious, and where the voice of boy or girl, of peasant or burgher, working without strife and resting without fear, "singeth a pleasant tune." The extremes of wealth, as well as those of penury, are inimical to the idea of



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ZEELAND GIRLS CLEANING COPPER.

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homeliness. Who could regard miles of mansions and acres of flats fifteen storeys high as homely, any more than long rows of dreary dwellings all exactly alike, that have never a feature of their own or anything to identify them except a number? The case is not much mended when the long rows are changed for the "semi-detached," which in due course become labelled with the borrowed names of real homes, and seem pathetically to plead—Why are we not homes? Are we not called Holm Leigh, and Fern Lea, and Carisbrooke, and The Firs, and The Elms, etc.?

So it is not here that we shall find the thing to which the spirit of these names bears witness. The desire for it is there, the regret at missing it is there; but to find the thing itself we must go to scenes where homeliness has long dwelt, and to

social conditions from which it has never been banished; to cities not overgrown, and to homesteads whose simplicity is dear to those who dwell there, and is not only a memory of childhood, but the abiding note of a lifetime, and able to yield such contentment as Sir Henry Wotton wrote of, in the man who is

Lord of himself, though not of lands, and who "having nothing, yet hath all."

The spirit of Englishmen has always had something in it of friendliness and good comradeship towards the Dutch, notwithstanding some strenuous fights; and we have not become so changed by the growth of commerce and empire as to willingly part with so pleasant a relation and tie. Our literature shows it to have been a long-standing and cheerful relation, with plenty of fun and humour intermingled, and compacted of



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DRAWING WATER.

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AN INTERIOR AT LAREN.

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genuine appreciation and sympathy, with not a few of those touches of like nature even one of which can make the whole world kin. Our ancestors showed this feeling not only in literature, but also by their taste in art, and the large numbers of pictures of Dutch interiors and landscapes which they bought and hung in their houses. In later times, also, when we began to have artists of our own, some of them have found not the least happy of their subjects among the scenes of the Netherlands. Few more restful pictures, for example, could we find to hang on our walls than E. W. Cooke's painting of "Dutch Boats in a Calm"; or few more delightful, by way of contrast, than Stanfield's "Entrance to the Zuyder Zee" in anything but a calm, and in which the crazy old windmill on the right looks as if it might at any moment totter to ruins!

The whole country is a land of waterways such as hardly any other part of the world can show; and these have a great charm of their own, as every traveller knows. Beside being a land of waterways, it is also a land of their counterpart, namely, great dykes. This is a feature which long ago struck the imagination of Dante, and gave him one of those fine similes or comparisons which he was so fond of etching into the rich scene of his work with an incisive touch that makes them live for ever:

And as the Flemings build the lofty mound,
From Cadsand unto Bruges against the tide,
Fearing its flood, and thus have safety found;
On such plan were the mounds we now survey'd
Though not so lofty nor so vast, whoe'er
The Master was by whom it first was made.

And what of the dwellers themselves in these Low Countries—to use the old-fashioned phrase? The word that again comes to mind as most descriptive of their general characteristics is the word homely. The people correspond with their surroundings. They have a picturesque simplicity of dress, especially the women, whose bare arms and short skirts and white sun-bonnets, with sometimes a veil or lappet hanging over the back of the neck, give a look of devotion to home and its daily labour, which is not always indoors, as it is apt to be with us, but is often in the garden or fields around the house. The very make of their wheel-barrows is distinguished from ours by a look of consideration for the mother or daughter, who will perhaps wheel it not less often than will the husband or son. The stout yoke on their shoulders is another witness to the sturdy strength of those who draw water from the well and carry it home in the manner which our own forbears were accustomed to before local authorities insisted on a tap to every cottage and waterworks for every village in the land.

Another thing one notices among these old-world homes is the beauty and, oftentimes, the age of the brass or copper vessels for every kind of domestic use. English cottages are poor indeed

sunlight, and who had found out that there are reflections in water, and that boats require often to be painted upside down."

The trees of that land are not as our trees, but who knows not the curious beauty that Hobbema saw and has made us see in the avenue of sparse and slender stems, with all but their top branches cut away, such a strange contrast to our rooted oaks and shady elms and thick beeches and stately limes, but seeming to bow their heads one to another, and to wave in the summer breeze with almost the motion of the ears of corn? Mr. Kipling, we know, has told us that

God gave all men all earth to love,
But since our hearts are small,
Ordned for each one spot should prove
Beloved over all.

Yet we think there is a mood in our minds which can enjoy with a real zest the particular charm of each country of the world; and the Dutch mood is one of the most distinct. If not a mood of much excitement or startling heroism or great adventure, yet it is one where the pleasure is real, and of which



M. Emil Frechon.

THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION.

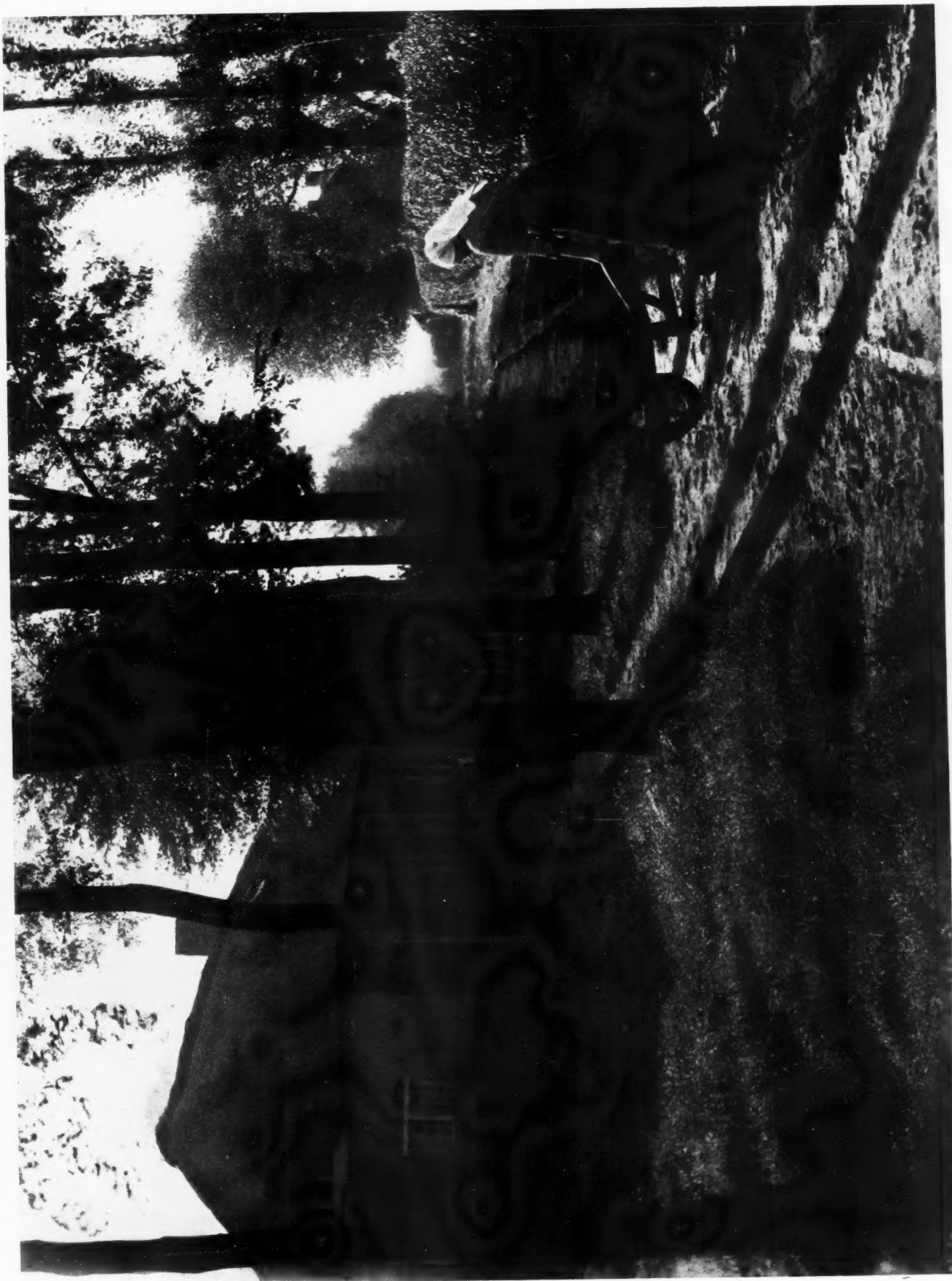
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compared to those of the Dutch in this respect. What is so striking in contrast to those used by ourselves is that among the Dutch scarcely one is of tin. It reminds one of the contrast noted by the old scribe between his day and the days of Solomon, "all of whose drinking vessels were of gold, none were of silver. It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." But in this respect the people of the Netherlands will have something to do to keep their household treasures, so keen are the curiosity hunters from Kensington, and so eager are their clients to make up for lost time; for, indeed, it is no small delight to become possessed of some of those burnished beauties and quaintly-curved cans and kettles, of the very same forms and shapes that charm us on the canvas of the elder and younger Teniers, and may even have been in careful use from their day to our own.

When we go out of doors and pass by boat or road from one town or homestead to another, we can still feel the charm that first greeted us in the landscapes of Hobbema or of Cuyp. Mr. Ruskin, indeed, was but stunted in his praise of the Dutch landscape painters, but he is forced to acknowledge that the last-named artist was "a man of large natural gifts, who could paint

the elements are akin to the best stuff of human life—the affections of home, the tasks of the family, the peace of those who make little or no baste to be rich. These men who have sat beside the still waters of their country for so many centuries have had something to teach us in past days, even as they have to-day. On our Eastern coasts, from Lincolnshire to Suffolk, there are still the traces of their skill and enterprise in draining lowlands and redeeming miles of territory from being bog or marsh or fen, and turning it into pasture or a land of crops. For such names as New Holland and Dutch River, on the south side of the Humber, date from the time when some of these skilled makers of dykes and drains and "cuts" were brought over to show us how to deal with what were then regarded as waste lands, and how by a system of artificial channels and sluices, such as they were familiar with at home, it was possible to alter the face of the ground and gradually raise it above the water level. They accomplished this not merely by shutting the water out, but also by letting it first in, thick and turbid from the estuary of the river, and keeping it shut in by gates until it had deposited its "warp" or castings of mud before they opened the sluices for its return.

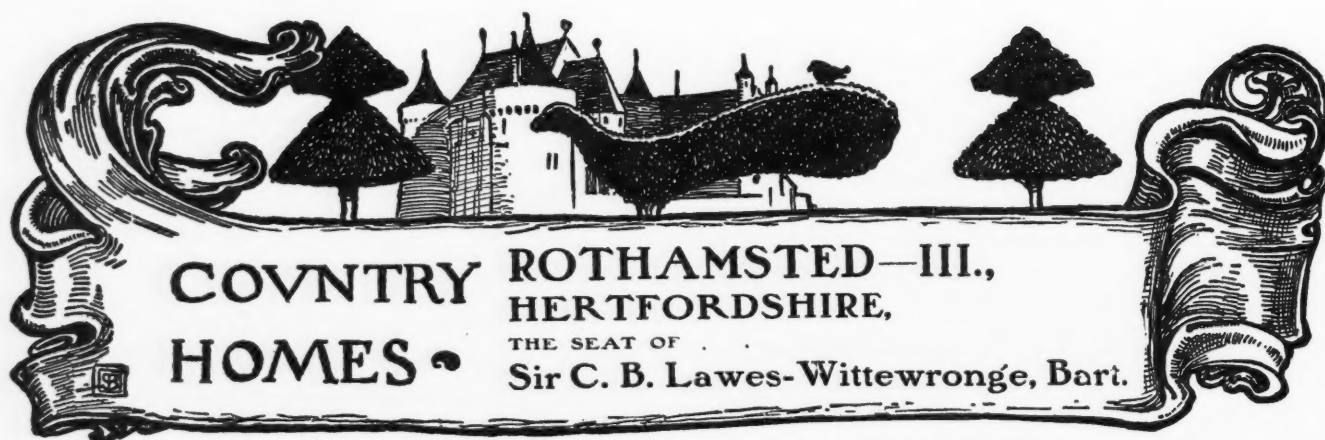
WILLIAM H. DRAPER.



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WORK IN THE MORNING SUNLIGHT.

M. Emil Frechon.



A DEEP impression is made upon those who have walked through the chambers and passages at Rothamsted by the furniture and household goods here assembled. This is not so much by reason of our having here a plenishing of old, and in many cases remarkable, pieces of furniture, in good condition and of genuine character, but because the furniture, well-arranged and uncrowded,

becomes part of the house which harbours it. The present owner of Rothamsted has made important additions to the collection which he found in this old and worthy case—a collection which begins with the muniment chest, harnessed with iron, which stands near the bellcote, and the old trestle-table of the kitchen, relics of the Cressys and Bardolfs. Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge has expelled from Rothamsted

the commonplace furniture of the nineteenth century, replacing it with choice pieces which have in no wise the air of spoils of the sale-room, but rather that of pieces made for the comfort of Rothamsted. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are not offended by an admixture of Chippendale and Sheraton, nor is the chill primness of Adam allowed to affront the freedom of the ancient wood-carvers. The main table in the hall is one of a type of which few examples remain, a table of elm wood of the early part of the sixteenth century whose form keeps the tradition of the Gothic period. It is supported upon two uprights with scrolled outlines, through which are thrust the ends of the frame and of the long stretcher, which are then fastened with stout pegs. A long oaken bench with six legs stands at one side of it. The standing cupboard at the hall end is a notable instance of early Renaissance work in England, an English reflection of a form common in Flanders. Its eleven panels have each a head in a fantastic head-dress, carved in profile and surrounded by a garland. The heads in the lower cupboard are surmounted with graceful ornament in the Italian manner, dolphins and flowers, a mask, and a cherub's head. The upper part divides into three little cupboards, and the lower opens with two doors. It is of the age of Henry VIII., and was probably carved within ten years of the year 1525. This important cupboard was found at Otford in Kent, where it may have formed part of the furnishing of the old palace of the archbishops of Canterbury. On either side of the cupboard stands a chair with a three-cornered seat amongst posts and rails of turned wood, a chair of a type which puzzled our forefathers when they first came to the consideration of old household goods, "Anglo-Saxon" or twelfth century



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IN THE DRAWING ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

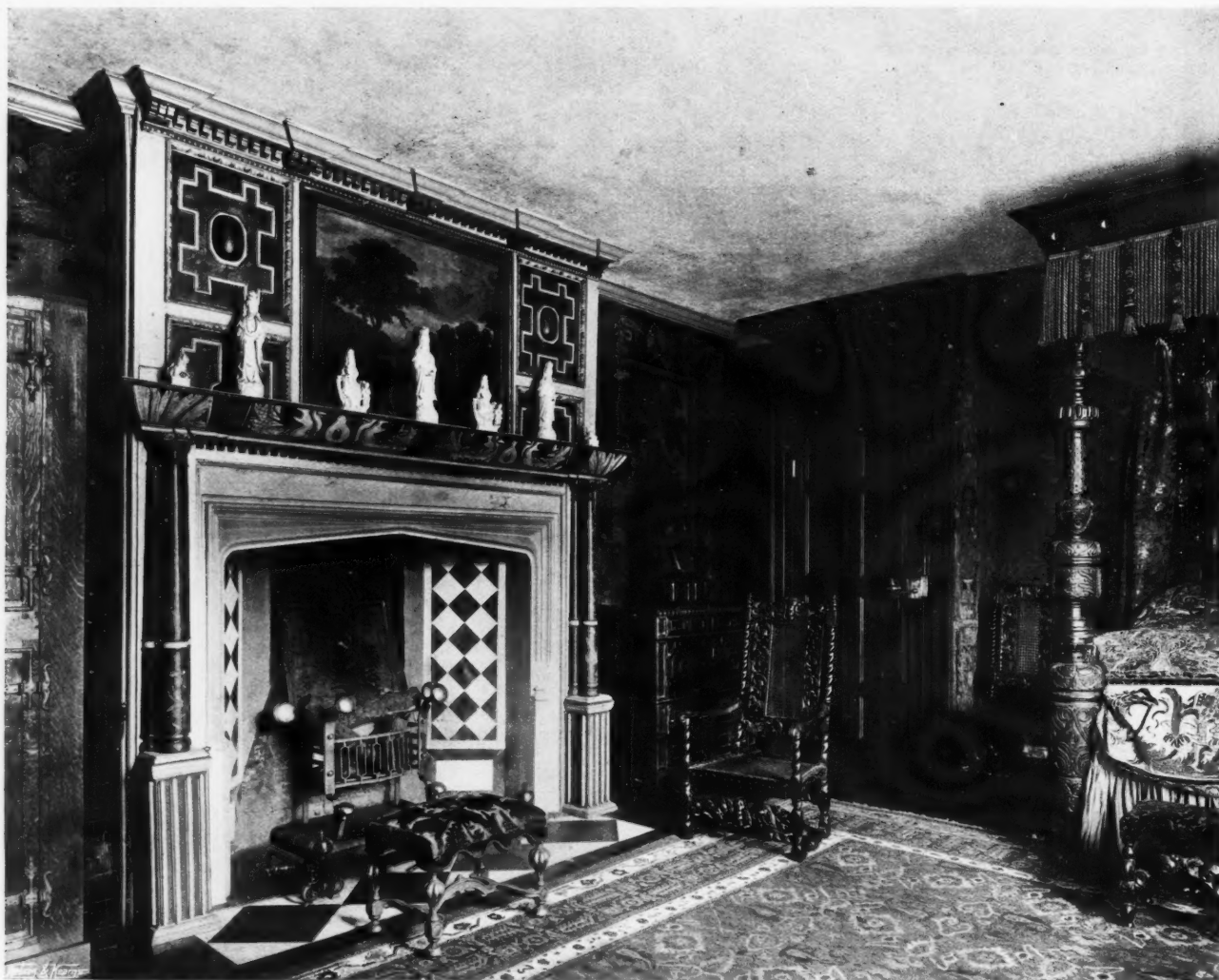
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SIR CHARLES' ROOM.

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THE BLUE ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE RED ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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IN THE BROWN ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

dates being freely bestowed upon such. These two are doubtless of the sixteenth century, but the work affords few points by which more exact dates may suggest themselves. The hall furniture cannot be left without notice of a little piece of great beauty and interest, a joined stool of rare Gothic work. Under the shadow of the top panels the favourite ornament of the vine is boldly carved above a line of Gothic tracery on the broad stretcher. The firedogs of the hall fire are cast-iron from the Sussex ironworks of the sixteenth century, and the fireback has the arms of a Tudor sovereign.

Throughout the house are found many of those richly carved walnut chairs, with and without arms, of that florid type in which the court of Charles II. rested itself and forgot the hardships of exile. The seat and backs of such are caned,

which give them the advantage of lightness over the oaken chairs which came before them. Their main lines are simple enough, but the carver has his will of every corner of them. The uprights are twisted with turner's work. Flowers and acanthus leaves fill every broad space of the flat stretchers, the framing of the caned back and the cresting giving another occasion for pierced work of cherubs supporting crowns or vases of flowers and fruit. An armchair of this type is seen in our picture of the hall, facing the high settle of the fashion of an earlier generation.

At Rothamsted are several of those rich posted bedsteads which make the chief pieces in a collection of Elizabethan furniture. With panelled back and testers, wrought cornices and posts like temple pillars set in urns, these beds speak of the high ceremony

with which our fathers would surround their births, weddings, and deaths. The bed in Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge's own room is a good example of an Elizabethan bedstead of graceful proportions, upon which the joiner and carver have spent all their art, the posts springing lightly from their broad bases. Fortitude, Justice, Charity, and Hope stand to divide the panels of the back, the picture of a city being faintly seen in the marqueterie of the midmost panel. This bed is remarkable as showing lines of deliberate design which contrast with much aimless ornament of this the latter end of Elizabeth's reign. The brown room has a posted bed whose low tester is not more than six feet from the ground. The height may have been cut down

in reconstruction. The posts stand on very wide plinths, from which rise square bases of enriched panels to half the height of the post. The arched compartments of the panels of the back are painted with flowers in vases in place of the inlaid work which might be looked for, and every other inch of woodwork is somewhat aimlessly enriched by the chisel. It may be assigned to the first half of the Elizabethan age. The modern drawing-room has in its midst a great table of late Elizabethan work, with a shield of arms in the midst of the carving on either side of the frame, and the date of 1595. But the chief ornament of this room is in the magnificent tapestry hangings of Flemish work about 1500. Most of them are figured



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OLD NEEDLEWORK IN THE BLUE ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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CORNER OF THE MORNING ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

with the sibyls who prophesied of old the coming of Christ. They stand in glorious garments amongst rich verdure, flowers, and branches. In the foreground are lions, pards, and lesser beasts, while in one tapestry a centaur with club and shield faces the spring of a lion. In another the Father of Heaven, robed and crowned as an imperial priest, looks down upon the kneeling Abraham, bidding him, in a scroll, take the shoes from off his feet. Georgian wardrobes and Louis XV. clocks, an Adam chimney-piece, and candle-sticks and ornaments in the style of the empire, carry to the nineteenth century a collection whose catalogue is a hand-list of the fashions in furniture from the first coming of the Wittewronges to the old house.

Rothamsted owes much of the beauty of its position to the trees on every side. It must be remembered that we are here at the world's headquarters of scientific husbandry, the last owner of

the manor house having made the name of Rothamsted known wherever the plough turns the furrow. John Bennet Lawes was born in the house the winter before Waterloo, and inherited the estate on coming of age in 1834, before which time he had fitted up one of the best bedrooms of Rothamsted as a laboratory with test-tubes and retorts. He left Oxford without a degree, the

age being one in which our universities had no place for young chemists and scientists, and his first experiments at home were with drugs, which roused in him such an interest that he is said to have learned the pharmacopœia by heart. At Rothamsted he grew poppies, hemlock, and nightshade, crops which must have disturbed the imagination of his brother squires. But it was a remark of a neighbour which set him to the work of his long life, Lord Dacre speaking in his presence of the curious fact that the bones which



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THE WEST LAWN IN SPRING.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

helped the turnip crop in one farm were of no use in another. By 1842 he had taken out his first patent for converting phosphates into manure by treating them with sulphuric acid, becoming at once the pioneer of those manufacturing chemists who have supplied the land with artificial fertilisers. The next year his Deptford factory was opened, another being built at Barking in 1857. In London he began a great business of manufacturing acids, from which he drew the great fortune which he spent in Rothamsted experimental station, founded the same year as his Deptford factory.

With Dr. Joseph Henry Gilbert as his collaborator were developed upon his ancestral lands their famous series of experiments in the rotation of crops and their artificial nourishment, and in the economic feeding of cattle. The knowledge thus gained he gave freely to the world, Rothamsted becoming a place of pilgrimage where farmers and men of science of all nations met together. Lest the work should fail with his lifetime he created a trust in 1889, whereby the laboratory and certain lands were vested in trustees for a long term of years, giving the "Lawes Agricultural Trust" £100,000 as an endowment fund. In the committee of nine persons by which the fund is administered

and interesting as they are, we do not think that they will do much to advance architecture in England. With much of his criticism on the architecture of the Victorian era, such as the statement that "the Gothic revival, which insisted on the sincerity and honesty of its building, rapidly became one of the most insincere movements that has ever happened in the history of architecture," or that "the work of steadying English architecture has yet to be done," we cordially agree; but we look in vain through Mr. Blomfield's book for any light as to how the "steadying process" is to be brought about.

His account of Palladio and the influence he exerted over Inigo Jones, who, Mr. Blomfield says, "fell headlong into the arms of this teacher," is most interesting, and he has given us a very good account of how, acting through Inigo Jones, Palladio became the great source of English architecture, a source so powerful that even the genius of Wren was not able to divert it. This, however, is ancient history, and now only valuable as an object-lesson to avoid "dulness and pedantry," which Mr. Blomfield fears may arise in the "chaotic state of modern architectural taste, which will follow by a too abrupt revulsion from anarchy to a rigid dogmatism in design."



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FROM THE DRIVE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the owner of Rothamsted has a seat, the Royal Society finding four persons, the Royal Agricultural Society two, and the Linnæan and Chemical Societies one each. His recreation he found in deer-stalking and salmon-fishing, but he, nevertheless, worked until his death at a good old age in 1900. His son succeeded him in the Rothamsted estate and in that baronetcy which had been in 1882 the inadequate national recognition of a great man's life spent in the service of the nation and of mankind.

STUDIES IN ARCHITECTURE.

WE are not sure that Mr. Blomfield was well advised in reprinting these articles from the *Quarterly* and *Architectural Reviews*. Such articles are more of an ephemeral than of a permanent value, and we question whether articles on Fontainebleau and Newgate, or reviews of Rivoira's book on Lombardic Architecture, or Vachon's "Philibert de l'Orme," will form the part of his work by which Mr. Blomfield will desire to be remembered. Clever

We are more in accord with Mr. Blomfield in his observations about Newgate. We confess we regret its demolition; as he says, "There was nothing else quite like it or quite so successful within its own peculiar limits." At a time when the architecture of the country was at a very low ebb the Corporation of London employed a man to get some architectural quality out of an enormous wall. As Mr. Blomfield says, "Prisons, work-houses, and asylums built since have, with rare exceptions, been built with a sole regard to economy and without any consciousness that so many gigantic eyesores were being left to a contemptuous posterity." Except that probably posterity will never see the buildings—for they are usually so badly built that they will hardly survive this generation—the bitterness of these remarks is only equalled by their truth. Any idea of good architecture never enters into the head of the modern local authority. The design must be of the cheapest, the tender must be the lowest, and if £1,000 is saved out of £100,000, no matter at what cost of efficiency, to say nothing of beauty, the councillor rubs his hands and appeals to the ratepayers as having done his duty. Recently one of the bodies that look after British architects sent round a memorial to local authorities calling their attention

to the lack of beauty in modern public erections, and making some suggestions to bring about something better. The memorial fell flat; it was most unfortunately worded, as it stated in effect that the local engineers and surveyors were not architects, in the best sense of the word, and knew nothing of beauty of construction. Nothing could be more true; but truth is not always pleasant, and the local surveyors resented the memorial as an attack on them, and an attempt to get work for members of the memorialists' body. The economist said, "Our man is good enough for us—we will stand by him." It is most unfortunate that this should have been so, for this ill-advised attempt has made it more difficult than ever to get local bodies to rise out of the slough of ugliness in which they are sunk. Yet, possibly, in the next twenty-five years the public buildings that will be erected by local bodies will form one of the great features of English architecture of the twentieth century. There is a great field for the revival of architecture in this direction, and if Mr. Blomfield would not despise labouring in it, and with his knowledge of architecture produce some designs for hospitals, asylums, and schools which had some idea of beauty, he would do more for his art than was done by Dance. We hope he may be induced to do so, and not leave us merely to "fluke into fine designs," or, to adapt a contemporary of Dance, "Blunder into beauty unawares."

We have not space to follow Mr. Blomfield into his observations on French architecture, but we are glad to see that he is on the side of those who, like Montalembert, consider that the most destructive force arrayed against old buildings is State guardianship of them. Indeed, we are not sure that the day will not come when the *bête noir* of architects will be either Viollet-le-Duc or his master, Napoleon III.

THE SUSSEX FOWL.

IT is a curious but undeniable fact that poultry-keepers in this country will always more readily take up a new breed if it comes from abroad. With the exception of the Orpington all the important modern breeds have been imported—Rocks, Wyandottes, and Leghorns from the States, Faverolles from France, Campines from Belgium, and Anconas



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

EXPLORING THE WOOD.

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from Italy. We had no British breeds except the Dorking and the Game until the breeders of the Sussex fowl brought forward claims to have their birds ranked among the recognised breeds by the Poultry Club. This has at last been done; there is now a Sussex Poultry Club, with its headquarters at Lewes, and classes for this breed are now provided at the principal shows. Yet it remains practically unknown out of Sussex. Recently, however, a book on the subject entitled "All About the Sussex Fowl," by J. W. Hurst, has been published, and this will aid, I hope, in bringing the merits of the Sussex fowl before a larger public.

Years ago, long before the advent of the club, I kept the breed and thought highly of it, but owing to its extreme variations of colour it seemed hopeless that breeders would ever agree upon a standard. Some would have it the speckled was the original colour, others the red, and others that the light or white Sussex—which looks very like a light Brahma—was the Sussex, and in the end all three varieties have been recognised, and I have heard of another in process of evolution. The history of the breed extends a long way back—there is very little doubt that the modern exhibition Dorking and the Sussex fowl spring from the same origin, and the Dorking, as everyone knows, was introduced into this island by Julius Cæsar; but for a long time past there have been two distinct types—that of the Dorking Club and that of the Heathfield fatterer. The latter paid practically no attention to plumage; his aim was, and is,

to get a big square bird carrying plenty of flesh, one which grows rapidly and fattens easily—roughly speaking, the birds he uses for fattening are from half to three-quarter Dorking and the rest alien blood. But it began to dawn upon the breeders of the Sussex that, always keeping in mind the fact that the Sussex was a table fowl, there was no reason why some uniformity of plumage might not be introduced. As a result the Sussex Poultry Club was formed at Lewes in September, 1903, the first show of Sussex fowls was held the following month, while its first appearance outside Sussex was at the Royal and the International in 1904.

The standards of perfection drawn up by the Sussex Poultry Club and accepted by the Poultry Club (which, I need hardly remind readers, fills a similar position in the exhibition poultry world as the Kennel Club in the dog world) have been carefully formed to maintain the utility value of the



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

BALLS OF DOWN.

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breed; thus size has 25 points awarded it and colour only 20. The points are allotted as follows: Colour 20, condition 10, type 20, head and comb 10, feet and legs 15, size 25—total 100. The red and the speckled varieties vie with each other in popularity; the light have rather fewer admirers, and around their origin some discussion circulates; they are so exceedingly like light Brahmas in plumage that it is obvious that breed has much to do with their origin, and yet it is an undoubted fact that birds very similar to them used to flourish in Sussex long before the Brahma reached these shores. To take the red variety first, the standard which I epitomise says of the cock that the plumage should be dark or chestnut brown, allowing for greater depth of colour on saddle and wing-bow, neck hackle glossy brown, striped with black, wings rich dark brown, with black in flights, tail black, tail coverts dark brown, and wing-bows deep brown. The hen is brown plumaged, with a black tail and black in the wing flights; the hackle should be dark brown striped with black. The speckled cock should have the head and neck hackle a rich reddish brown, striped with black and tipped with white, red wing-bows with white primaries, a black and white tail, tail coverts the same colours as the neck hackle, black breast feathers tipped white, and slight admixture of brown admissible. The hen has white wings, a white, black, and brown tail, and the remainder of her plumage white, black, and brown, as evenly spangled as possible. The light cock should have a white head, a white neck hackle striped with black, white wings with black in flights, a black tail, white tail coverts slightly tipped with black, remainder of plumage pure white. The hen a white head, a white neck hackle striped with black, white wings with black in flights, a black tail, remainder of plumage pure white.

Equally important to the breeder are the general characteristics of the birds. The cocks should have a head of medium size, and a short strong curved beak of white or horn colour, eye full and bright, and comb of medium size, evenly serrated, erect, and fitting closely to the head; the face is red, the ear lobes and wattles are of medium size. The chief feature of the body is its squareness; the breast should be broad and carried well forward, with long and deep breast-bone; the shoulders wide, the back broad and flat, the thighs short and stout, and the wings carried close to the body, tail of medium size. The shanks should be short and strong and rather wide apart, the toes four in number, straight, and well-spread, and the weight 9lb. and upwards; in fact, the bigger, so long as symmetrical, the better. The hen's general characteristics are the same as the cock's, allowing for difference of sex; her weight should be at least 7lb. Such features as five toes, feathers on shanks, and rose combs disqualify. In shape and general appearance the Sussex approximates to the Dorking, especially as the colour of the legs is white.

Such is the present modern Sussex fowl—a big, shapely, and far from unhand-some bird; but it is not so much what it looks like as what it does that is of importance to-day in the poultry world, as the era of breeds which have "feather points" and nothing else to commend them has passed away. This is a utility age, and a popular fowl must have a utility value. And this the Sussex fowl has; it is the finest table fowl extant, and, in spite of the claims of La Bresse fowls, which, though weighing only 5lb. or so, frequently fetch 20fr. in French market-places,

it is probably the finest in the world after it has passed through the fattening process in the Sussex cramming-sheds. It always fetches top price in the London market, about 1s. a pound being the average selling price, which varies less throughout the year than one would think, considering how the prices of unfattened chickens fluctuate with the seasons. It is also a first-class layer of brown-tinted eggs, and no finer proof of this can be witnessed than a visit to the chicken-growing districts early in the year. The visitor will see lots of young chickens; the small breeders who raise for the higglers hatch them the year round. There is no off-season, as in the case of the duckling industry; every week or fortnight the buyer calls, and even the cottager's wife with a stock of half-a-dozen or so seldom sends him empty away. In no other part of the country are big broods so numerous. The Sussex hen is big, and easily covers fifteen eggs in spring—occasionally more; and broods of fifteen, all hatched by the same hen, can be continually come across. The hens are splendid sitters and mothers; big though they are, they are not clumsy if properly handled, and seldom fail to bring off a big brood. Incubators are little relied on in the home of the Sussex fowl; though more fowls are kept there to the square mile than in any other part of the country, the chickens are all hatched and reared naturally.

The methods of rearing and fattening followed in Sussex are probably familiar to most readers; at any rate, they are outside the scope of this article, which is concerned with the Sussex fowl alone. Poultry-keepers are always looking out for an all-round fowl, a good table fowl, and also a good layer. The Rock, the Wyandotte, and the Orpington have hitherto alone filled this demand, and in adding the Sussex to the number I am in agreement with Mr. Hurst, who boldly declares it the most useful all-round breed of all. For instance, at the Uckfield College Training Farm, Mr. S. C. Sharpe, the director of the poultry department, reports that, keeping careful record of the eggs laid on the farm, the red and the light Sussex came out on top as winter layers, beating the following breeds: Buff and Black Orpingtons, Indian Game, Silver Grey Dorkings, White and Brown Leghorns, Plymouth Rocks, Silver Wyandottes, and Black Minorcas. Now it is far more important for a fowl to be a good winter layer, and have an average, say, of 130 eggs in the year than to have an average of 150 almost all laid in spring and summer, for it is

the winter egg that pays. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the breed is largely increasing in popularity; there is a steady demand for eggs and chickens from other parts of the country, and the more the merits of the breed are known the more this will continue. In brief, Sussex fowl look like enjoying a boom, and every poultry-keeper knows the advantage of keeping such a breed, as there is then a ready sale of surplus eggs and fowls. Large sums have been made this way over Buff Orpingtons; smaller sums have been lost over such breeds as the Campine and Lakenfelder, which are not so much in demand as they were. I should add that the

Sussex is a hardy fowl, and does equally well in liberty or confinement, though, perhaps, owing to its broodiness not quite so suitable to the suburban poultry-keeper as the Minorca. It is a large fowl, it must be remembered, and requires rather more food than a breed like the Leghorn, but the money it costs is quickly brought back in eggs and fowls, both of the very highest quality; and what more does the poultry-keeper want!

CHARLES D. LESLIE.



A HEN'S HACKLES.



OUTSIDE THE GRANARY.

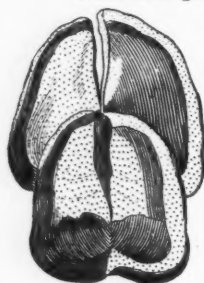
HUNTING THE WILD BOAR.



OLD BOAR AT BAY.

THE veritable wild boar has been so long extinct in Great Britain that very few of the modern English treatises on hunting afford any information as to this arduous and exciting chase. Some instructive items concerning it are collected in Mr. Harting's "Extinct British Animals," from which it appears that boar-hunting was quite a favourite sport from the very earliest times, and was pursued with vigour by Britons, Romans, Saxons, and Normans in turn. Many of the localities most frequented by the bristly beast, whose ravages were so much dreaded by the farmer and gardener, are still known by names which perpetuate the memory of his depredations and his battles for life, such as Swindon, Hogmer, Branspeth (Bran's path), Wild Boar Clough, Everley (from *Eofor*), and several Highland names in which are incorporated the words *Tuirc*, *Mhuc*, and *Chulloch*, signifying the wild boar, sow, or hog. The "preservation" of this animal as game may probably be said to have been first effectively secured by an enactment of William the Conqueror, which provided that the unauthorised slayer of a stag, roebuck, or wild boar should be punished by the loss of his eyes. The Plantagenet and Angevin kings were all fond of this sport, and made frequent grants of land as rewards for prowess in it, or on condition of keeping and furnishing hounds for the Royal use. The boar was borne as a badge by Edward III. as well as by Richard III., to whom it may perhaps be thought specially appropriate by those who remember the doggerel couplet:

The Rat (Ratcliffe), the Cat (Catesby), and Lovell the dog
Ruled all England under the Hog.



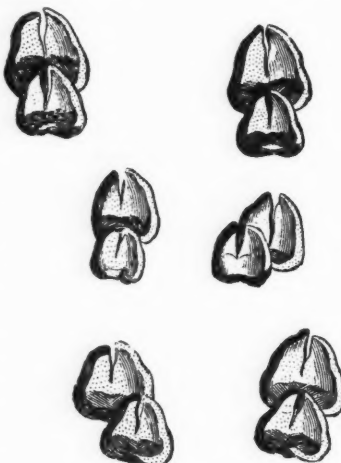
FOOTPRINT OF
YOUNG BOAR.

There seem to have been wild boars in Savernake Forest in the reign of Henry VIII., and they were hunted in Windsor Forest by James I.; but in the New Forest they were probably extinct then, or very soon after, for Charles I. imported several from France or Germany, and turned them out in the Hampshire forest, where they were, naturally enough, exterminated in the Civil War times. Mr. Harting does not think that the wild boar was extinct in England before the reign of Charles II., or in Scotland until the next century. And in quite recent years several attempts

have been made in Derbyshire, Dorsetshire, and other counties to reintroduce the animals, but without much success.

Turberville in his "Booke of Hunting" gives some quaint instructions as to the pursuit of this animal with "mastiffes and such like dogs," premising that hounds which have once been used for this purpose will not afterwards follow any other beast of which the scent is less hot, and makes some interesting observations as to the "nature and subtiltie of the Bore." "The Boke of St. Albans" contains an explanation of some of the terms used in boar-hunting and the nomenclature of the quarry at different periods of his life. For some time after his birth he remains a "hogge of the sounder," and then drops the latter part of his title, and becomes first a mere "hogge" and then a "hoggestere." Not until the fourth year does he become a "boor," and "from the sounder of swyn then departeth he." The sounder is, of course, the family herd, and is used only of "wilde swyn," numbering at the least five or six individuals, whereas the term used for "tame swyn" is a "trip." The French nomenclature, as it will be seen, is different and more accurate. Most of the quite modern books on hunting which mention the wild boar of Europe—a different animal from the *Sus indicus* which figures in the sport of "pig-sticking"—take their accounts from Colonel Thornton, whose observations on the subject are themselves

borrowed almost verbatim from the French work containing the illustrations here reproduced. The notes by which these illustrations are accompanied in the original present us with a much more vivid and accurate description of the scenes which in the forest of St. Germain, and still later in the Ardennes, were enacted when a grand boar-hunt, with all its attendant ceremonies, was organised and carried to a successful termination. The first requisite for an accomplished boar-hunter was to be able to interpret correctly the marks made in the mud or turf by the feet of the quarry, and so to distinguish not only between the spoor of the wild and the tame hog, but between the "traces" and "markes" made by these animals according to their age. Thus the aspirant to honours in this craft was expected to study carefully the charts in which, as in the illustration, footmarks of various shapes and sizes were figured with all the precision that the



FOOTMARKS OF MARCASSIN.

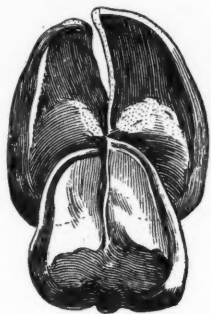


FOOTPRINT OF
FEMALE.

draughtsman could attain to. The first of the series is the trace made by the *marcassin*, or wild pig, less than twelve months old. Next to it comes the footmark of the *bête de compagnie*, or *bête rousse*, or pig of the sounder, in the second year of his age. The third year finds the porker dignified by the name of a *ragot*, and in the fourth year he at last attains to the honours of a *sanglier*, or boar, which title is enlarged a few years later into *vieux sanglier*, *grand vieux sanglier*, and *solitaire*. French sporting and forestal terminology gives its own special names also for the bodily members and peculiarities of this very game object of the chase. His head is a *hure*, and his snout is a *boutoir*, with which he makes *vermillis* as he pokes about on the surface of the ground. He sharpens his *défenses*, or formidable tusks of the lower jaw, against the *grais* of the upper jaw. His shoulders and the back of his neck are protected by a stiff, coarse mane called *armure*, and the lair in which he reposes is known as a *bauge*. He treads more on the fore part of his hoofs than the back, and steps with each hind foot into the trace left by the fore foot, whereas a different mode of progression betrays the domestic swine.

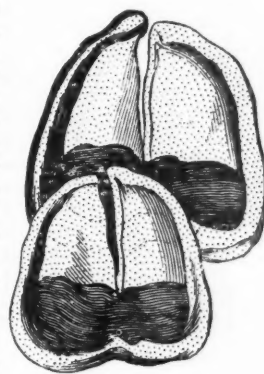
All writers agree in regarding the chase of this animal as very fatiguing to the hunters, whether biped or four-footed. And it is, of course, also dangerous. When the traces of a full-grown

boar are found, he is tracked by lime-hounds to his stronghold in the woods, which will be found in summer somewhere near a cornfield, in autumn in the neighbourhood of vineyards, and later in the year in a part where there are acorns or beech-nuts. Once driven from his lair the wild boar is followed by a good-sized pack of strong and courageous hounds, which must be encouraged all the time by much blowing of horns and shouting—the favourite cries being “Hou! hou! Vecei, mon petit! Vecei aller, mon tou-tou!” and the like. The men must be well mounted, and must spare no efforts to keep the boar going, without turning to bay, until he is well tired. The chase of a



FOOTPRINT OF OLD FEMALE.

young boar may be prolonged for as much as six or seven hours, but the old stager is heavier, and will not often go more than two hours before making his stand. He then rushes with extreme ferocity at his assailants, and is almost certain to rip some of them, often mortally, with his first onset. Horses are often also ripped in the leg and their riders thrown, in which case they are likely to be charged by the infuriated animal. It is in this emergency that it is permitted by the laws of *venerie* to use firearms. In ordinary cases the privilege of firing is reserved to the Master of the Hounds; but any rider may, if his own life is in imminent danger, shoot with his revolver in self-defence. In the hunting of wild sows or pigs of the sounder, whose tusks are not accounted dangerous to life, the use of firearms is unlawful. The orthodox mode of finishing the hunt is for one of the huntsmen to plunge his hunting-knife into the throat or neck of the quarry while he is still charging at his foes. But it is also lawful to use the *épieu*, or boar-spear, which is a stout shaft armed at the end with a broad and very sharp blade. The shaft is also sometimes fitted with short arms, or fork-like branches, for preventing the boar from continuing his charge right up to the man, even after his body has been transfixed by the spear-blade. A notable incident attending the finish of a boar-hunt is the dressing of the wounds of such hounds as have been wounded. For this purpose the *habitués* of the hunt carry with them a box or bag containing needles, thread, bandages, and strips of bacon. The gashes are first washed with warm wine and water, and, after strips of bacon have been laid on the wounds, they are bandaged up before the hounds are taken home. The whole pack is, of course, well rewarded and made much of after its long and trying exertions. The trophy of honour, which is brought to the Master, and by him presented to the king or the lord to whom the forest belongs, is the right fore foot of the slain boar.



FOOTPRINT OF OLD BOAR.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

ALMOST unnoticed among the more striking and theatrical occurrences of the past quarter of a century, the development of Egypt has been going on so marvelously that it will assuredly rivet the attention of future historians. In the meantime, from his abundant knowledge, Sir Auckland Colvin has given in *The Making of Modern Egypt* (Seeley) a book possessing far more than the usual interest attaching to the class to which it belongs. Sir Auckland's work is almost epic in its character, but epic in a very modern sense; that is, it is no tale of chivalry and of warriors, but of social and financial reform. Those who do not like to study hard facts set in a phalanx of figures will do better to avoid it, and the writer's hero is neither paladin nor religious enthusiast, but the financier, Lord Cromer, who played his part for so many years as Sir Evelyn Baring:

The central figure throughout that period has been the British Minister and Agent. Cabinets in London, in Paris, and in Cairo have come and gone; diplomatists have fretted their hour on the stage, and have faded into obscurity. Able and devoted subordinates have in turn assisted the British Agent, and, their term accomplished, have passed on to other labours. Lord Cromer alone has remained throughout; in him, during more than twenty years, the life of Egypt has centred, and from him all energy has radiated.

Of course, many other interesting figures flit across the stage, the most interesting of them all being, no doubt, General Gordon; but it is somewhat melancholy to find how little weight is allowed by the practical politician to those romantic qualities which have endeared Gordon to the public imagination. Sir Evelyn Baring himself, when the mission was started, seems to have been of the opinion that General Gordon would fail in a manner undreamed of by those “who were not blinded by attachment or misled by admiration.” In the following sentences what many thought his finest attributes are by Sir Auckland Colvin coldly described as disqualifications:

Directly guided, as he believed himself to be, by the finger of an ever-present Providence, his impulsive and emotional nature was beyond human control, or comprehension. Years of solitary communings in the African deserts, long days and nights of exhaustion and fatigue, fevers, privations, wrestlings in prayer and spiritual strivings, had worked their inevitable effect on the texture, both of mind and body.

Gordon's previous success was against slave dealers, and he does not himself seem to have been able to estimate the forces of fanaticism against which he had to contend on his second appointment. Sir Evelyn Baring's judgment was that “General

Gordon's personal influence in the Soudan was over-rated both by himself and by public opinion in England.” If little credit is given to Gordon, still less is it extended to the various administrations that have been responsible for the management of our Eastern affairs during the last twenty years. A great result has been attained, but it was neither worked for, nor expected by, those who had the direction of affairs in their hands, or were thought to hold them in the balance. Mr. Gladstone was compelled to remain in Egypt by the force of circumstances, and seems to have looked forward to a time when the country could be evacuated. The European nations tried on various occasions to thwart the British Government, but apparently were as incapable of evolving a deep and long-sighted policy as were our own statesmen. At times soldiers played a vigorous part, but Sir Auckland Colvin does not linger long over the achievements of Lord Wolseley and Lord Kitchener. They played their parts well, but the importance of the battles they fought lies to-day mainly in the support they gave to Lord Cromer. In this connection it may be well to refer to an effective passage, in what may be called the old-fashioned view about Egypt, as contrasted with the modern opinion. General Gordon's dictum had been that “The Soudan was a useless possession, always was, and always will be.” In the days when the Mahdi was flourishing, the view set out in these phrases was generally accepted as a correct one. If the Soudan had to be subjected it was chiefly because it harboured the lawless fanatical hordes who were always liable at a moment's notice to sweep down on Egypt proper.

To Egypt, in Lord Cromer's opinion, the recovery of the headwaters of the Nile is an acquisition beyond measure and beyond price. Increase to the supply of water for the irrigation of Egypt must be found, not in Egypt, but in the Soudan; and the certainty acquired upon that point is one of the first fruits of the reconquest. Sir William Garstin's examinations and inquiries conducted in the Nile valley during the last six years place this point beyond reasonable doubt.

It would be difficult for us in the space at our control even to make a rapid survey of the work done in Egypt during the last twenty-five years; but on the principle *ex uno disce omnes* we may make some reference to the Corvée. At a time when “The labourer of the fellah was urgently needed to hoe and weed his own fields,” Sir Auckland most truly says, “thousands of nearly naked men jostled one another under a blazing sun at the bottom of long ditches full of mud and water, carrying baskets crammed with mud up the steep sides.” The first remedy for this state of things came from English engineers, who in 1883-84 set to work

to modify the system by partial use of the barrage. They raised the water surface and closed certain regulating bridges during low Nile. They obviated the necessity of digging the canals so deep. Under the old system 63,000,000 cubic metres of earth would have had to be excavated but for these measures. As it was the unpaid Corvée labourer was equivalent to 165,000 men working for 100 days. In 1886 the equivalent had been reduced to 95,000 men, thus saving the labour of 70,000 men for 100 days. This was the first good effect provided by a combination of finance and engineering. The condition of affairs now is thus described by our author:

A commencement was thus made, which in the course of three years led to the complete disuse of forced labour for purposes of canal clearing. The corvée on a limited scale, and in a very altered form, is still temporarily employed for the purpose of watching and reporting any danger to the banks of canals during the period of high Nile. Thus in 1903, 11,244 men were called out for 100 days for this purpose. But they were employed in their several villages through which the canals in question ran, solely for the purpose of giving warning of danger to their own fields. Use of the field telephone will further reduce the number necessary for this purpose. A paid corvée is also from time to time employed for a short time in emergencies, such as locust plague, or for the destruction of the cotton worm.

In the disuse of the canal corvée, and of the kurbash, Great Britain has established strong claims on the gratitude of the poorer class of Egyptian. But the sense of favours conferred proverbially lives longer in the memory of giver than of receiver. In respect of public benefits and in dealing with masses who are alien in blood, in religion, in customs, and in colour, gratitude is more than usually evanescent. With the generations that have suffered, the memory of suffering dies. No greater mistake could be made by Great Britain, whether in regard to Egypt or to India, than to build upon the shifting sands of gratitude a fancied superstructure of goodwill, still less, an imposing fabric of loyalty. The choicest gifts of alien rulers are often the least remembered, and irritation caused by the presence of a foreign body goes far to outweigh in the national mind the sense of any benefit accompanying it.

It would be extremely fascinating to follow the account of Sir William Garstin's inestimable labours, his six years' observation, and his excellent report. But the subject was treated at length in our pages some years ago, and, at any rate, the reader will find it much more satisfactory to study the facts as they are set forth most ably by Sir Auckland Colvin. We can only do ourselves the pleasure of quoting one more passage from the book. It is out of what might fairly be termed its peroration:

It has been said or sung, that the East calls us. It is neither East, nor West, nor any one quarter of the world, but the lust of adventure and the love of enterprise, that are calling to the men of our race. Every undeveloped people, every unexplored country is calling. Athens and Rome, long centuries ago heard that call, and followed it. We are treading not unworthily, let us hope, where free and fearless men of old have trod before us. Wherever there are to be found great areas peopled by strange tribes, wherever mighty rivers roll from sources little visited by man, wherever seemingly illimitable forests bar the way to human intercourse, wherever the mystery and the fascination of the unknown or the unfamiliar are felt—all such lands are calling to adventurous spirits among us, for whom there is little room in the crowded field at home, or who prefer to the well-worn paths of the old world the hazards and the freedom of a world which is to them new. A century ago it was—as it still is—India; to-day Nigeria, East Africa, Rhodesia, the Egyptian Soudan are calling.

RACING NOTES.

FOR the second year in succession, the Grand Military Gold Cup has been won by an animal owned by an officer of the Senior Service, though the Army can console itself with the reflection that on both of these occasions the winner was ridden to victory by a soldier. Last Friday, however, not only did the Navy claim the winner, but Captain Craddock, who was third on Prizeman, was within measurable distance—only two heads—of being the first officer of the Navy to own and ride the winner of the Grand Military. Last year Admiral Lambton bred and owned Ruy Lopez, whose victory was due in no little measure to the skilful riding of Captain Stacpoole; and the race fell this year to Royal Blaze, purchased from Mr. H. Heasman by Mr. R. F. Eyre. Of all the fine horsemen who have had successful rides in the race for the Grand Military, only three—Captain Roddy Owen, Lord Manners, and Major Campbell

—ever succeeded in also winning the Grand National. Lord Manners won the Grand Military on Lord Chancellor in 1882, and he completed the "double" by winning the great race at Aintree on Seaman by a short head, after a desperate battle with Cyrus, ridden by poor Tommy Beasley; and a curious fact in connection with this race was that Seaman had been sold out of the Eyrefield Lodge stable, as they felt confident that Cyrus would beat him. Roddy Owen, brilliant horseman as he was, only rode one Grand Military winner, viz., St. Cross in 1889, and it was just three years later that he and Father O'Flynn led their field such a merry dance in the Grand National. In 1896 Major "Soarer" Campbell won the Grand Military for Captain J. Orr-Ewing on Nelly Gray, and the Liverpool on The Soarer; and the following year he was again successful in the soldiers' race on Parapluie, belonging to Colonel G. H. Gough.

The first of the three days' steeplechasing at Sandown Park last week was taken up by the programme of the Sandown March Meeting, of which the Liverpool Trial Steeplechase, run over a distance of three and a-half miles, was the principal event. It is not surprising that much interest attached to this race, inasmuch as eight out of the nine horses competing in it hold an engagement in the Grand National, the solitary exception being Cissy's Revel. To lay odds of 3 to 1 on any animal in such a race as this would appear to be an act of folly, but that is the price at which John M.P. was quoted at the start; and, moreover, those who had the courage to lay the odds could never have had a moment's uneasiness, for Mr. J. S. Morrison's horse, after being hard held

for the first two miles, put in an extraordinary performance the moment he was allowed to stride along, and romped past his field as though they were standing still. Coming down to the water-jump for the second time, Wolf's Folly was leading, but as they landed John M.P. was a clear three lengths to the good, and there he remained for the rest of the journey, eventually winning in a canter by a length and a-half from Wolf's Folly (10st. 9lb.), with Crautacaun, carrying the same weight, filling the third place three lengths away. Liberté (11st. 7lb.) was fourth; Oatlands (10st. 9lb.) next; followed by Roman Law (11st. 5lb.). About this horse not a little curiosity had been expressed, it being his first appearance on an English race-course. It may, perhaps, be not generally known that he is a half-bred animal by Tacitus. He brought a good reputation with him from Ireland, and has been not a little talked about for the Grand National; but his performance on Thursday afternoon was distinctly disappointing, and his style of going and jumping created anything but a favourable impression. However, as his owner, Mr. A. Buckley, remarked, "Sandown is not Aintree." The saying is true; but while wishing him all good luck, if his fine powerful horse has anything to do with the finish of the great race I shall be much surprised. Liberté has a stone less to carry at Aintree than she had in the race under notice, and she and Crautacaun appear to be the only ones of those who finished behind John M.P. who are likely to make a creditable show at Liverpool, where, if Drumcree comes safely through his preparation for the race, I expect to see him win the big race. Ranunculus, another prominent Grand National horse, was given a public gallop in the St. David's Handicap Steeplechase, and, although he only managed to get fourth behind Apollino, Vibrant, and Queen's Scholar, Mr. George Faber need not give up hopes of seeing him run very much better at Aintree, where he will have 21lb. less weight to carry, and will be better served by his fine jumping and by the difference in distance between the two miles over which he ran in

this race and the four and a-half miles over which the Grand National is run. Goswell must have had a very uncomfortable ride on Wild Aster in the Selling Handicap Steeplechase, for after blundering and pecking at several fences in succession, he finally came down altogether at the water. Prince Tuscan, who had been driven along by Driscoll, fairly galloped his opponents down, and won easily enough by four lengths from Athel Brook and May Woodhouse.

The Grand Military Meeting commenced on the following day in the presence of a large and distinguished assembly of spectators. Dating back to 1860, the race for the Gold Cup has never been productive of so desperate a finish as that which was seen on Friday afternoon, when, after their journey of three miles and a-half, Royal Blaze, Prince Talleyrand, and Prizeman were only separated by a head. Excitement ran high when Captain de Crespigny on Prince Talleyrand set himself resolutely to work to try and overhaul Captain Denny on Royal Blaze. Foot by foot the ground was being made up; the eyes of the spectators were riveted on these two horses and their riders, when suddenly Captain Craddock and Prizeman made their appearance on the scene, and joined issue with the leaders. With such a dash did they plunge into the fray, that it seemed as though they had just succeeded in "getting up"; almost locked together the three horses swept past the post, and in another moment it was seen that Royal Blaze had maintained his advantage, and that Prizeman had just failed to catch Prince Talleyrand. Altogether a great race, and one which is well worthy of a place in the annals of the Soldiers' Derby. "Business is business," and, on that ground, in lodging an



CAPT. RASBOTHAM ON DUNPHAIL.

objection to Royal Blaze, Captain de Crespigny was strictly within his rights, but the objection was a purely technical one, and was overruled by the Stewards. Having done his duty, we like to think that such a good sportsman as Captain de Crespigny was pleased that the decision had been given against him. Of other races during the afternoon Mr. C. Bewicke made an example of his opponents when he rode his own horse Glamore first past the post in the Selling Steeplechase; but he paid dearly for his victory, as it cost him 600 guineas to buy his horse in after the race, both the race fund and Captain Denny, who was second with Monotype, coming in for a very substantial bonus. Mr. J. Buchanan's luck has not turned yet, and all that Vril could do was to finish a bad second to Prince Royal in the Walton Hurdle Race; but he will win before long, and would have made a better show in this race had he not lost ground at several of the hurdles. Then came the easy win of Shoot in the Past and Present Steeplechase, and again the Ogbourne stable furnished the runner-up, Eteocles finishing second and Ticket o' Leave third. A very cheery day's racing came to a conclusion when Captain Stacpoole won the Maiden Steeplechase for General Hamilton with Olive, beating John Shark, ridden by Captain Rasbotham, and Mr. R. C. de Crespigny's Warner, upon whom his brother, Captain de Crespigny, had the mount.

Both Glamore and John Shark, who finished first and second in the United Service Steeplechase on Saturday, are the property of Mr. C. Bewicke, who rode the former himself, entrusting the mount on the latter to Captain Stacpoole. John Shark was backed for a good deal of money, a good many people, among them the owner, doubting the ability of Glamore to give him 2st. But for his collision with H.T., it seems probable that John Shark would have beaten his stable companion. There was a good deal of falling about during the afternoon, Lord Hugh Grosvenor, Captain de Crespigny, Captain Rasbotham, and Mr. W. Cullen all coming to grief. Quite one of the features of the meeting was the performance of Rassendyl in the March Open Hurdle Race. Carrying the tremendous burden of 13st. 3lb., he was carried out at the turn into the straight, and had to be pulled right out of his stride; but so rapidly did he make good his lost ground that he landed first over the last hurdle, and was only beaten by a neck in the run home by Bellivor Tor, to whom he was conceding 28lb.

TRENTON.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE HIRING OF FARM SERVANTS.

THIS is the season of the March hirings in the North of England, and it seems that a very considerable change is coming over the local custom in regard to the engagement of farm servants. It is one that has been visible



W. A. Rouch.

SAFELY OVER THE OPEN DITCH.

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for a long time in the South of England, where the "statis" or "mop" has been gradually falling into disuse. This really is the equivalent of the March hiring in the North of England. The practice, however, seems to be now that, instead of attending at the market to be hired, the labourers either advertise in the papers or answer the

advertisements of the employers, and in some of the local publications sent to us we see that there are columns devoted to this season of the year to this species of announcement. Some of them are remarkable reading in more ways than one. One advertiser, for instance, asks for a woman to milk and do odd work, in return for which she is offered a cottage and the usual perquisites, while it is added that one with a boy or girl would be preferred. In many others the demand for women workers is emphasised, all of which points to the fact that the exodus of male labourers is still going on, and at as great a rate as ever.

THE SHIRE CHAMPIONS.

Although we waited last week long after the usual time at which we go to press, it was impossible to give the final results of the Shire Horse Show to our readers. The judges had a very severe task before them, but their awards gave general satisfaction in the end. The Shire Horse Society's gold challenge cup, value 100 guineas, for the best stallion in the show, is perhaps the most coveted trophy in the Shire world. It was won on this occasion by Messrs. Forshaw with Present King II., while the reserve was given to Lord Egerton of Tatton for Tatton Friar. The corresponding cup, value fifty guineas, and a gold medal for the best mare or filly in the show also went to Messrs. Forshaw for Sussex Bluegown; while in this case Lord Rothschild held the reserve with Princess Beryl. The £20 cup for the best stallion not over three years old was won by Lord Egerton of Tatton with Tatton Dray King, while Lord Rothschild was again reserve with Childwick Champion. The corresponding cup for the best stallion over three years old was won by the champion of the show, and the reserve for this prize was also the reserve for the championship. The £10 cup for the best mare or filly not over three years old was given to Sir P. A. Muntz's Dunsmore Fuchsia, with Mr. Michaelis reserve with his Pailton Sorais. The best four year old mare and the mare



W. A. Rouch.

THE GRAND MILITARY MEETING: AT THE WATER JUMP.

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in reserve to her were the championship pair. The best gelding in the show was Mr. Mark Alcock's Shustoke Jumbo, with Mr. A. C. Sparkes's Oldfield Duke as runner up.

The success of Messrs. Forshaw is very creditable indeed to their knowledge of horseflesh and their management of the good animals entrusted to their possession, since both the stallion and the mare had up to the time of the show enjoyed a reputation that was strictly limited and local. It is this kind of thing that makes breeding interesting. Anyone with a deep enough pocket can if he chooses procure the best blood in the world at a price, but only the man that knows his Shire horse thoroughly is able to recognise a treasure when he sees it amid obscure surroundings.

SOME SHIRE GOSSIP.

The president of the Shire Horse Society for next year is Mr. R. W. Hudson of Danesfield, whose excellent stud we illustrated in last week's issue. He succeeds Lord Rothschild, who during last year proved himself an ideal head of the society. The most successful of the exhibitors, as will be seen from our brief summary, were in the first place Messrs. Forshaw, who have dissipated one long-lived superstition, which was that the championship was sure to go to some familiar animal. It is safe to say that not one in a thousand of the spectators of the judging last week had ever seen Present King II. before he appeared in the show-ring. He was bred by Mr. Joseph Phillipson of Hainton,



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AFTER A HEAVY DAY'S WORK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

near Lincoln, and is a big, powerful black cart-horse by Coming Prince out of Lively. The mare Sussex Blue-gown was bred by Mr. Thomas Luckin of Thakeham Place, Pulborough, and is by Nailstone Cœur-de-Lion out of Sussex Bluebell. The judges were of the opinion that there was little to choose between this splendid mare and her reserve Princess Beryl, a weighty ten year old black bred by Sir Henry Ewart, K.C.B., of Felix Hall, Kelvedon. Lord Egerton of Tatton's success was another

welcome feature of the show. He missed the highest honours, but carried off a vast number of the others. His Tatton Friar was very much admired, and there was little indeed to choose between this horse, Present King II., and Lord Rothschild's Girton Charmer.

THE CONDITION OF THE MARKETS.

Very little change has been noted in the markets recently by the reporters of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. It is very curious that the market for English meat remains very much what it was, in spite of the ever-growing facilities for importing chilled and frozen meat from our Colonies. Evidently one of the most profitable animals of the farmyard this year is the pig. The price of bacon still keeps up to a very high point, and the consequence is that from nearly every centre we hear that the supply is not meeting the demand, and that prices keep up to a very high average. Sheep, too, are in good demand, and the inevitable consequence is that the farmer who is turning his



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A WELCOME FEED OF TURNIPS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

attention to livestock has a very much better chance of doing well than has the one who continues to cultivate cereals in spite of all the lessons that experience can teach. From the small holding, there is not much of importance to tell. Butter still remains a fairly dear commodity, but when March comes in chickens begin to lay freely, and eggs naturally fall in price. In regard to vegetables, the most noteworthy point made by the official reporter is that "potatoes have been a dull trade, and

that quotations generally are lower." We are afraid that the boom in potatoes has now become a thing of the past. The crop under ordinary circumstances tends to be a fairly remunerative one, but the excitement and inflated prices that were common two years ago have now passed so completely into history as to be almost incredible. The idea that a potato had been discovered which for any length of time could be warranted to withstand the ravages of disease has proved to be now a myth and a delusion.

SHOOTING.

FROM THE DEER FORESTS.

THE deer seem to be making a very favourable winter of it. This is said in the first place with reference to the deer that we stalk in the Highlands; but it seems to be no less true of the Exmoor, the Quantock, and the other deer, that we hunt with hound. Writing from Glenmuick, that is to say, Ballater, which is about the centre of the deer-forest country in the Highlands, or at least near enough to be accepted as a typical case, Sir Allan Mackenzie says that "the deer are looking very well, have wintered splendidly, with no hand feeding up to the present" (but in all likelihood they will have been given some hay or some beans since then). He speaks of some heavy snow-storms, "but with a strong wind, so the snow was blown off the ridges where I try to have long heather, and the deer are doing very well on the higher ground. In some of the lower corries, more sheltered and near a wood, unless the weather alters in a day or so, some hand feeding may be required. Of course it will be required if a partial thaw followed by a hard frost sets in on top of the snow." He adds that the weather was very fine during hind-shooting, and expresses a doubt, in consequence, whether enough hinds have been killed.

Apart from that consideration the weather would seem in all respects to have favoured the deer, both here and in other parts of Scotland, during the winter, so far as it has gone. Last year the stalking season was a very fair one, in fact, better than the average; but its drawback was that in many parts of Scotland the stags were, on an average, quite a stone lighter than they should have been, and this in spite of the fact that they were carrying very good heads, and, generally speaking, had them clean of the velvet at rather an earlier date than usual. The cause was, no doubt, that just at the time that the deer ought to have been putting on condition, that is to say, just before the beginning of the stalking, and during its early days, the weather was continually wet, and the stags did not get their proper rest or their proper nourishment. The question, to which Sir Allan Mackenzie refers, as to the killing of the hinds, is, in the opinion of most of the best qualified judges, a very important one for the stock of deer all over Scotland. A good many are disposed to attribute the deterioration of the deer, which it is to be feared is beyond dispute, to the excessive numbers of the hinds. The Highland hills are wide, and if they were all good pasture there would be feed enough for all the hinds and stags and many more; but the patches of good pasture are few and small enough in relation to the whole area, and there is but scant feeding for all the deer that are now in Scotland. No doubt there is a minority that are in favour of sparing hinds, but it is a select minority. It is a system that has had a good trial, and the numbers of that minority have been yet further reduced by the result of the trial. The system of killing no hinds is one that has its effect not only on the forest in which it is practised, but on the surrounding forests also. The head-stalker of a forest adjoining that one which is, perhaps, most notable of all for the experiment of killing no hinds was

complaining to the writer bitterly of the poor hinds, the old and worthless hinds, that were left in far too great numbers, to be the mothers of a poor stock. The stalker in general is by no means one of a class whose opinions are to be quoted as of great worth. As a rule stalkers are not a remarkably intelligent or observant set of men; but this man is the exception. He has studied the deer very closely. Every hind that he kills he dissects, and he is an excellent field naturalist in all respects. He spoke bitterly of the disadvantages of leaving the hinds undisturbed, if only because it did not scatter them, left them in their own glens and led to the interbreeding of relations. These and the like problems of the right management of a deer forest do not by any means seem to be settled by an unanimity of opinion yet; but we have every right to say that they seem to be approaching such a settlement. There is a general consensus on points that

were very hotly debated only a few years ago, and the minority becomes smaller every year. Thus the great majority are falling into line with the opinion on hand feeding that it is a necessity on most forests in hard weather, but should be resorted to only when quite necessary. The spring is the time that really tries the deer; but, as the late Lord Lovat always argued, a deer that has wintered well (and the hand feeding helps the wintering) has a much better chance for the spring. Again, the late Duke



S. P. Gordon.

ON A HIGHLAND DEER FOREST.

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of Westminster—and the present Duke, continuing the same system—has proved on the Reay Forest how deer may (in weight, if not in head) be improved by killing off bad stags and sparing good ones. The same method has notably proved the same result at Strathvaick, in the hands of Mr. Williams. Probably it would do much good if the stalkers, when hind-shooting, were to shoot bad stags also. The value of change of blood, chiefly by the importation of park stags from England (Mr. Lucas's famous herd at Warnham, in Surrey, has helped to improve the stock of many Highland forests), is fully recognised, and on that point it may be noted that the time is coming now when young stags may most conveniently be entrained and sent up, though it is, of course, always possible to saw off their horns before putting them on the train at any other season. If they are kept in a paddock and the hinds are put in to them and let out again after the rutting season, it is obvious that a very much greater infusion of fresh blood will be imported into the stock than if the stags are just turned out on the forest to take their chance with the rest.

Hay makes, no doubt, the best hand feeding for deer in winter, but is not nearly so palatable as beans or Indian corn, and locust beans seem the favourite food of all.

"VERMIN" ON DEER FORESTS.

A GREAT deal of the business connected with shooting at this time of year consists in vermin-killing. On a forest that which is vermin on the moor becomes of positive value, just as that which is of value on the moor becomes vermin on the forest. The worst of vermin on the forest, because when they rise they invariably startle deer, and so spoil the stalk, are

the grouse. Ptarmigan do not matter, for the deer take hardly any notice of their movements. The creatures, therefore, that are treated as vermin on the moor—the stoats, hoodie crows, and especially the eagles—are to be cherished on the forest, because they prey upon the grouse. Yet it does not do to have eagles very numerous, because the shepherds will soon begin to complain if too many of their lambs are carried off by them. This is just about the time when they will be beginning to be troublesome in this way. If there are plenty of blue hares the eagles are far less likely to trouble about the lambs. But then, again, the blue hare is not a very helpful creature when you are stalking, so that it is difficult to keep the balance just as it should be between the various kinds. Possibly the custom of driving grouse has disposed them to further flights and more invasion of forests than they used to indulge in. In some parts jackdaws are very useful in keeping down the grouse, by their egg-stealing habits; and in at least one forest gulls do a good deal of the same poaching work.

SOME EXPERIMENTS AND THEIR RESULTS.

The idea of improving the stock of red deer by introduction of such foreign blood as that of the wapiti seems to be losing whatever favour it once had, and on some of those forests in the South-West where Japanese deer have been turned out the experiment has been regretted. On one forest they have been ingenious and fertile in experiment, and have turned out Barbary sheep amongst the rest; and the sheep are spoken of as giving very good sport indeed, being probably gifted with longer sight than red deer. One of the peculiarities of last year's stalking season was the number of roe deer that appeared on many forests, sometimes very far from woodlands. Generally speaking, this seems to have been ascribed less to any great increase in the number of the roe than to a singular caprice of habit which induced them to go a-wandering more than usual. It will be interesting to see whether they are on the forests next year in the same numbers. They are not much trouble in a stalk, as they seldom run far, and it is easy to get round them.

THE GAME RECORD ON AN AUSTRIAN ESTATE.

It would be interesting to compare the total head of game of all sorts killed in any one season on some of the great Scotch properties with that which is reported to have been shot on the estates of the Archduke Frederic in Austria. Under the head of game, these are as follows: Wood-pigeons, 84; water-hens, 34; wild duck, 1,959; wild geese, 12; bustards, 46; woodcocks, 410; snipe, 478; capercaillie, 43; hazel hens, 57; quail, 404; blackcock, 1; pheasants, 10,367; partridges, 16,502; hares, 38,895; rabbits, 12,611; wild boars, 74; roe bucks, 672; does ditto, 397; stags, 264; hinds, 696; making a total of about 77,600 head. Still more interesting to English readers is the bag of vermin and various, which consists of the following items: Dogs and cats, 4,137; wild cats, 7; foxes, 378; pole-cats, 944; martens, 85; squirrels and hedgehogs, 4,048; badgers, 28; weasels, 1,725; otters, 17; eagles, 13; eagle owl, 1; kites, 47; crows and magpies, 7,112; hawks and falcons, 2,104; cormorants, 3; herons, 126; miscellaneous, 2,152; making in all 22,900 odd. Unfortunately, the acreage of the properties on which this huge amount of game and vermin was killed is not given; but, busy as the keepers would appear to have been, the proportion of vermin to game seems to exceed all due bounds, and one cannot help wondering how many head of game must have gone to feed the army of birds and beasts of prey.

POWDER AND SHOT.

"L. R. C." writes to ask what are the charges we would recommend for rabbit-shooting, game early in the season and game late in the season. Unless it may be for a specially heavy day at rabbits, or for some other exceptional purpose, such as long shots at pigeons or ducks, we do not see any necessity for departing from the normal loading of the cartridges which are used from the beginning to the end of the season. In the case of what is expected to be a day of continuous firing at rabbits, a few hundred cartridges

with a lighter load of shot would probably come in useful, on account of the lessened strain of the recoil, for it must be remembered that it is the weight of the projectile which is largely responsible for the "push" on the shoulder of the gunner. Opinions differ as to the best size of shot for all-round use, but it may be taken that number six is a good size for average shooting. Amongst other reasons for using this particular size of shot is the fact that it is generally used by gunmakers, and that on this account more attention is paid to its manufacture by shot-makers, and it is evident that the more even the shot is in shape and weight the better it will lie in the cartridge and the better will be the pattern it gives at game or on the target. With regard to the amount of shot to be used, it is noticeable that of late years there has been a constant tendency to decrease the weight of the shot-charge. Not many years ago an ounce and an eighth figured more or less as the standard measure of shot for a 12-bore gun; then it fell to an ounce and a sixteenth, until at the present day the majority of game shots find one ounce sufficient for their wants.

These changes have been to a considerable extent brought about by the improved manufacture of gunpowder, which has resulted in an explosive of more even and more perfect combustion and diminution of the strain on the barrel and breech mechanism of the gun. The smokeless powders now in use are a highly-scientific production, and the greatest care and skill are called for in their manufacture. The old idea that a low-pressure powder was a thing to be desired has long since "exploded," and the aim of the powder-makers of to-day is to produce a powder with a relatively high pressure (from 3 tons to 4 tons on the square inch in the chamber of the gun), but which will not be liable to develop *varying pressures* when stored and used under ordinary conditions. The task of doing this, and of, at the same time, making an explosive which will remain unaffected by changes of climate and temperature, and be effective for use in spite of such variations as must occur, notwithstanding all care in the manufacture and hardening of the grains, is a difficult one, but it has been well accomplished by our leading powder-manufacturers. However well made a gunpowder may be, it requires proper and skilful usage in order to benefit to the full by its good qualities, and with the explosives now in use, more care in loading cartridges is necessary than was the case in former days. The powder-maker has before him certain conditions under which his powder will produce the best results, and we are strongly of opinion that the best plan to ensure good shooting is to purchase one's cartridges ready loaded from one or other of the well-known firms of powder-manufacturers or gunmakers. They have the necessary apparatus for accurate measurement in loading at their disposal, and it may be taken that the maximum variation in the charge of powder contained in their cartridges will not exceed one-fifth of a grain.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PAIRING OF PARTRIDGES.

SIR,—I have read your article of the 17th ult. on partridge prospects with great interest, and am glad to say that opinions in this county are also very favourable as to next season. While for many reasons driving partridges after pairing is undoubtedly hurtful for the coming season, your reason that partridges will not pair a second time does not seem to secure universal acquiescence. I have taken the opinion of many owners and keepers in this neighbourhood, where driving only is practised, and very few if any support your contention entirely, and the majority are altogether against you. It would interest many if you would invite other opinions on the subject.—AN OLD SUBSCRIBER, Wolverhampton.

[It is always interesting to hear all sides of a question, and always possible that there may be a difference in local habit of birds; but it is certain that the weight of opinion in the Southern Counties and elsewhere that a big stock of partridges has been kept for years, and a close attention given to their habits, is opposed to "An Old Subscriber's" view. We think it would be a very great misfortune if any general doubt were to arise as to the destructiveness of shooting after pairing. It has been proved too often.—ED.]

THE CHASE OF A GOAT.

I FIRST heard of him at a London dinner-party, and when F., who told me his history, finished by saying, "Come up to me in September, and have a go at him!" I felt that, even in the midst of the depression caused by a London fog, life had still some attractions to offer. I heard much of him that summer, but until September 6th he remained shrouded in the mists of imagination. Then, as we were doing the last stages of my forty-seven-mile drive from Lairg, Mackenzie said, "There's the gorts!" There they were indeed, on the top of a rocky skyline, and in the midst of them, the ewes and kids playing beneath him, was my old billy. He was standing with his head up, every inch of his splendid horns thrown into strong relief against the pale lilac of an evening sky, and as I watched him that attack of goat fever began, which in the end nearly made me lose him, and for the best part of three days rendered me the most unhappy man in Sutherlandshire. Poor old chap! He made a good fight for it, but in the end Fate and a Rigby-Mausser were too much for him.

The Highland wild goat is very much like his tame brother, but often carries a finer head. Not knowing the Welsh goat, I cannot say how they would compare; but McLeay tells me he has seen a Scottish head with a spread of 36in. from tip to tip. Though their powers of scent are nothing wonderful, they have very good sight—better than that of either the roe or the red deer. Such, at least, was my experience. This is not to be wondered at, for all animals which live naturally in wide, open, and hilly

country rely for safety chiefly on their powers of sight; whilst those which live in flat or wooded ground trust almost entirely to their nasal organs. A good billy will weigh about 8st. I killed mine late in the season, when he was in very poor condition, or he would have scaled fully 8½st.

There are two types of horn: one curves back over the animal's neck, like that of an ibex; whilst the other takes an outward sweep a foot or more from the base of the horn. The goat I was after carried a head of the latter type, and when, on September 7th, I saw him in his home within half a mile of me, I longed for it with a great longing. It may have been wrong, it may have been a spark of the same spirit which filled the breast of some rude ancestor in the dim prehistoric ages when he saw an unusually fine specimen of the *Cervus megaceros*. But there it was; and though I think that no one, unless he be altogether a brute, can kill a living sentient animal without having a certain tinge of pity mingled with his satisfaction, the instinct of the hunter predominates until his end is achieved.

They had certainly chosen their home well. Up from the shores of a little hill loch rose a steep and rocky face. Amid the grey, lichen-clad boulders, picked out sharply here and there were green grassy slopes and cool dark hollows. In one of these hollows he was lying half hidden by a huge stone, looking out across the loch to where a mountain burn came brawling down from beyond the mists around Arkle. There were about a dozen of them altogether: four or five kids standing on their

hind legs and playfully sparring and butting, five or six ewes, and one or two young billys. As I watched a black and white billy invaded the sacred circle, and with a rush the old fellow was on him. His long dark hair, shading off at the flanks, almost touched the ground, and very savage and truculent he looked as he dashed at his rival. Doubtless the latter thought so too, for he did not await the charge, but fled to a friendly rock. It was apparently outside the danger zone, for the old billy did not pursue, and went back to his hollow. We were in full view of them, and to get near enough for a shot had to make a detour of at least three miles. However, we did it in under an hour, and presently reached the hill in the shadow of which they were lying. We had left F. where we had first spied them, and through the glass could see him signalling that they were still below us. We crept a little nearer, Ross, the stalker, first, and I close behind. A gust of wind came eddying among the rocks, and as it did so a horrible stench of goat took me in the throat. With his hand Ross motioned me to peep over the rock; 40yds. distant, and below me, was one of the ewes quietly feeding with her kid beside her. Ross cautiously withdrew his head, and as he did so a pair of widespread horns came into view. I reached for the rifle, and saw the ewe, with her head up, watching me. The old billy raised his, as he caught her attitude, and faced me. "Keep cool! Keep cool!" I heard Ross murmur. "Tak' your time." But the sight of those horns was too much for me, and I fired hurriedly as he stood there. At the shot he shook his head and, then turning, bolted over the rocks. I had a snap at his vanishing form, but he dashed on without any sign of a hit save an occasional angry toss of his head. At the time I did not know it, but found afterwards that my first shot had gone clean through his horn. Well, there it was. I had had my shot and lost him, and for the next half-hour I was pretty wretched, as we all feared he might leave the ground. So we had lunch, and then started off again.

I might go on to tell you of our long walk: of the beautifully graduated grey, pink, and white mosaics which we passed lying in little pools among the rocks; of the dimpling, sharp-toed tracks we found leading across the tops; of how we lost them among the rocks and refound them again further on, though we did not again see the little band who had made them; of how we continued the chase, hoping against hope, until the gathering gloom compelled us to turn our weary steps homewards; of the drive home, past long-armed sea-lochs looking out to where the Western Isles showed faint and grey on the broad bosom of the Atlantic; of Foinaven and rocky Arkle; of Ben Stack, Quinaig, Sugar Loaf, and many other landmarks with sweet-sounding names; but my space is limited. I will ask you to skip all this with me and start again on the Saturday, the whole of another day before us, and our hopes centred on the goat. Before we had driven the five miles which had to be left behind before we could start stalking, the sky had become overcast, and we made our way to the spying-place in a thin drizzle. From there we could see nothing, and I suspected from my companions' faces that they feared the goat family had removed their Lares and Penates to a safer district. However, on we went, the grey, heavy-looking masses of dark clouds banking up in the west. Amongst the rocks a dull booming re-echoed, and as we crept under an over-hanging rock the storm broke. The rain came down in buckets, while the wind tore and lashed itself into a fury. A curious cheeping noise from somewhere behind us caught my ear, and I asked Ross what it was. "Just an eagle," he replied, and though at the time I could hardly credit him, I have since had his answer confirmed. It sounded just like a young grouse. Under our sheltering rock were some comparatively fresh grey droppings, and also a strong smell of goat. This revived our hopes, for it showed they must have been on the ground since Thursday. As we were discussing what to do, Campbell, who was carrying my rifle, came creeping to us with a look of portentous solemnity on his face. "The gorts are close by; within eighty yards!" he announced, so Ross and I at once went up to some rocks where we could spy. From there only the black and white billy and one ewe were visible, so we crawled back to another boulder. Ross slowly raised his head. "I see them aal," he muttered; then, in a hissing whisper, "I see him; I see the big one!" We noiselessly retreated, and crawled up to a rock about 100yds. from the goats. There he was, just about 100yds. off, his horns, or so it seemed to me, longer, and even more desirable than ever.

"Tak' your time," whispered Ross. "Keep canny; he'll no move." I took time, and I was, as I thought, fairly canny. (Ross told me afterwards I was puffing like a steam-engine!) He was broadside on, and the light fair. After what seemed to me about three minutes I pressed the trigger. The old billy turned, and went scrambling off among the rocks at a gallop. This soon relapsed into the irritating half trot, half canter, which he could keep up for miles, and which I had grown to loathe. As for me, I let off a pretty big swear word; it really was justifiable. Then I sat down, and with great deliberation emptied the magazine at his retreating form.

"There they go!" said Ross, and we saw them straggling over a rocky top. Their pace is most deceptive; they will keep it up for any length of time, and though it looks slow, in reality it is pretty fast. They were nearly a mile and a-half off, and, as we watched, the leading kid swung to the left. "I think they'll keep just the same track they did on Thursday," he continued. "If they do, we can cut them off!" Accordingly we got up, and started for a distant knoll from which we could follow their movements. My period of blank despair had gradually thawed, and after we had covered a mile or so, in spite of the pouring rain, I even began to take an intelligent interest in life. At length we reached the knoll, and lay among the rocks with our glasses ready. For a long time we rested there, hopes and fears alternately predominating as a grey rock deluded us with the momentary belief that it was a goat, and the spy-glass revealed the brutal truth in a manner there could be no questioning. It is very hard country to spy. Indeed, it is a whole country altogether, this Sutherland, and unlike any other part of Scotland I have seen. The shaggy birch woods and melting hills of heather are gone, and in their place are the hard grey rocks lying in fantastic shapes on every side. They crop up in scarred ridges, like the healed blisters on a man's hand, or form gigantic monstrosities which loom largely at you from every skyline. Here you see the presentment of a cottage loaf, there a whale leers dumbly at you, his half-submerged bulk rising from a sea of deer grass.

At last, very quietly, Campbell said, "I see them," and there they really were, still travelling in the same order. First three kids, then the old billy, then the ewes, and last the two young male goats. They were moving steadily onwards, as if knowing the road, and we stayed but to make sure of their direction, then tore for the next top. I thought there that they had given us the slip after all, so long did we wait without a sign of them, when the leading kid, now only about 600yds. off, proved me wrong by obligingly making her appearance from behind a hill. Ross and I dashed off again, leaving F. and Campbell to follow at their leisure. For 500yds. or 600yds. we had a real hard run at top speed, parallel with the goats. A narrow ravine divided us from them, on the other side of which rose a rocky ridge. The goats were moving along behind this ridge out of our sight, but even as we stopped they came into view over the top, and began to descend into the ravine. As soon as they were out of sight at the bottom and began to ascend our side, we made a dash for the head of the pass. We reached it, and were crawling to the top of the knoll, when over some rocks I saw the head of the black and white billy, his progress arrested, watching us. Whether, knowing the danger, he forbore from his own selfish motives to give the alarm, or whether he was too far back in the line to warn his leader, I cannot say. Anyhow, the warning bleat which we were dreading never came, and as I sank behind Ross the leading kid passed an opening in the rocks 20yds. off. Then came the other two, and after them I had a vision of a broad back covered with long shaggy hair, and of curving, widespread horns. The sight steadied me, for I knew it was my last chance. I saw the ivory fore sight gleaming white against his dark side. Then I fired. At the crack there was a rush and the clatter of falling stones, but the old goat lay very quiet and still, an inert mass among the rocks; whilst the black and white billy, who had failed him in his hour of need, drove the ewes before him down the pass.

FRANK WALLACE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CLIPPING YEW TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Will any of your readers tell me what is the proper time of year to clip yew trees?—R. O. LLOYD.

[The month of April and early May.—ED.]

MAKING A POND WATER-TIGHT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I notice the above heading to a paragraph in your issue of January 27th. I have been told that turning pigs into a newly-puddled pond has the desired effect of making a small pond water-tight. The action of their small feet continuously pressing the clay pugging is more efficacious than any amount of human labour; anyhow it seems worth a trial, being inexpensive. It would be interesting to hear the result from "Constant Reader," should he think it worth while putting this suggestion to the test.—THE GAZER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your correspondent does not give any particulars as to the situation of his pond or any hint as to the probable cause of leakage. If the surrounding soil is of a permeable nature, the pond could be made thoroughly water-tight by means of puddled clay placed as follows: Excavate the whole of the floor of the pond, say, 9in. deeper; cover with a layer of well-puddled clay 6in. deep, thoroughly rammed; cover this with 3in. of any easily procurable soil or, if thought advisable, gravel, also well rammed; the slopes to be treated in the same manner, only, if possible, with a deeper covering of ordinary soil. If the clay is suitable this should form a permanently water-tight pond, providing the clay layer is always kept moist. The cost of doing this as described should be about 1s. per yard superficial.—GEORGE BATTY.



WE MILKING IN ICELAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Noticing in your issue of February 24th the quaint engraving of "Women Milking Ewes" from the "Loutrel Psalter," I cannot help sending the enclosed photograph, taken in Iceland last August, as showing how closely the custom there to-day approximates to that of our Saxon ancestors.—M. J. L.

FIRE IN STABLES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It is a well-known fact that horses in a fire become so mad that often it costs a man's life to get them out of a burning stable, even after they have been set loose. I saw in a paper the other day reference made to an old custom of keeping a goat in stables, who would not only give alarm (being very keen nosed), but who would by walking out quietly induce the other animals to follow it. But what I want to know is: How would such alarm be given unless the creature had access to the groom's sleeping-chamber, presumably up above, and, in such case, is there any workable method of releasing the horses' heads without going into the stalls? The idea seems a good one, but not, as described, practical. In the Sandringham stables telescopic bars pull out from the end of each stall, so as to prevent a loose horse from wandering along the gangway and disturbing the others, or getting kicked by them; this also would militate against the horses following the goat out. Perhaps, considering the great value of horseflesh, you may think this subject worth ventilating.—H.

TITS AND FRUIT-BUDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As the tit and bird season is now on us, it may be helpful to some of your readers to know that for the last two years I have succeeded well in keeping them off the young fruit trees and currant and gooseberry bushes, by tying on old luggage labels on long strings, so that they whirl about in the wind; and also I save the bulb and seed bags and put inside a few small stones, then tie close at top and hang these up. The stones make quite a good noise if the bags are stout and inflated first.—J. S. A.

DO SALMON RETURN TO THEIR NATAL RIVERS?

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It is always interesting to read what Mr. Willis-Bund has to say about salmon, and especially about the salmon of the Severn, for no man has given them longer and more close attention. It is especially interesting when a man with so much experience comes forward with something like a new opinion, as published in your number of February 17th. Virtually it is the expression of a new opinion, controverting, as it does, the more or less established one that salmon return to breed in their natal rivers. Without following Mr. Willis-Bund into details, it is enough, and I think it is fair, to say that he bases this view on the fact that in the Severn, so far as the catches show, there are not enough grilse to account for all the salmon, and the inference, therefore, is that the grilse go up some other river and only return in the salmon stage to the river Severn. In the first place, I should like to ask—I ask Mr. Willis-Bund to give an answer, for no one can do it better—to what extent are the catches on the Severn evidence of the fish in

the river? To put it otherwise—what opportunities do fish have, owing to the situations of the nets, tides, floods, close times, etc., to get up the river without being caught? Fish of different sizes run up most rivers at different seasons. If the conditions are much more favourable to catching them at one season than another, it must very much upset the value of the catches as evidence for the purpose here required. May not the chance of catching fish be exceptionally good when the grilse are running one year, and when salmon are running the next? A second question I would ask is—have we any absolute assurance that a grilse cannot pass into the salmon stage without ascending a river? I fully believe that it has to do so to make the change; but have we evidence to make it sure? And a third question I would ask Mr. Willis-Bund—what value, if any, does he attach to the statement often made by keepers, etc., on the Wye and Usk, that they can tell apart Wye, Usk, and Severn fish? The great difficulty that I find in accepting Mr. Willis-Bund's theory is (apart from the evidence of the return of marked fish, which seems as yet to be inconclusive) the difficulty of accounting for the cause, if we accept the theory, of a big river and a little river side by side, running out close to each other, and yet having such very different sized salmon. It is not a question of age—what it is that determines the size of the fish seems to me a great mystery, since from the big river and the small alike they go down to the sea to feed and grow—but it is, I think, nearly certain that in the little river there will be little grilse and little old salmon, and in the big river big salmon and big grilse. The Findhorn and the Nairn offer instances in point. If salmon do not return to their own rivers, how is it that there is such a difference in type of the fish in two rivers running out so close together? I think a great many others beside myself would be very interested in reading Mr.

Willis-Bund's replies, if he is good enough to give them, and any further points he may care to make.—
HORACE G. HUTCHINSON

SARDINE FISHING.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—The accompanying little picture was taken at Lisbon; the craft is one of the many thousands of sardine boats that fish on the river Tagus, and off the coast of Portugal. In more Northern seas one hears that the sardine has become capricious, and, quitting its old accustomed shores of Brittany for the waters of the newer Western World, has left the Breton fishing-folk sadly lamenting; but no such disaster has as yet overtaken the Portuguese fisherman, who daily relies on the richness of his coast water, which literally holds in shoals the savoury sardine.—E. A.



A WINTER SCENE IN THE HIGHLANDS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph was taken on the summit of Cairn Mhairn (3,500ft.), one of the Cairngorm Mountains. The rocks in the foreground are heavily coated with ice crystals to a depth of fully an inch. The mountains in the distance are the Monadh Mhor group, which lie between Aberdeenshire and Perthshire, with Inverness-shire to their right. The photograph was taken in mid-winter with the temperature about zero, and a strong south-east wind blowing, so photographing under such conditions was a doubtful pleasure.—
SETON P. GORDON.

